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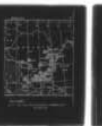
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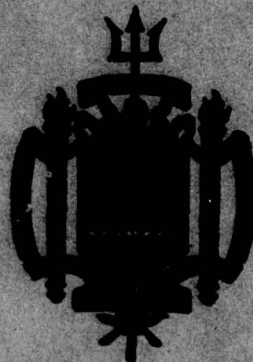
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**A TRIDENT SCHOLAR  
PROJECT REPORT**

**NO. 95**

**AD A0 58702**

**"NAVAL PRESENCE AND COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY:  
A STUDY OF THE DECISION TO STATION THE  
6TH FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1945-1956"**



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U.S.N.A. - Trident Scholar project report; no. 95 (1978)

"Naval Presence and Cold War Foreign Policy: A  
Study of the Decision to Station the 6th Fleet in  
the Mediterranean, 1945-1958"

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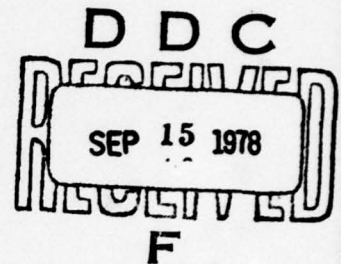
A Trident Scholar Project Report

by

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Class of 1978

U. S. Naval Academy

Annapolis, Maryland



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Wm. Love, Jr.".

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Advisor

Accepted for Trident Scholar Committee

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Roberts".

Chairman

1 JUN 78

Date

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the origins of the United States Navy's Sixth Fleet, the only force ever to be so designated and the only American naval presence ever deployed to the Mediterranean in defense of nations washed by that Sea. The paper first covers with brevity the history of American naval activity in the Mediterranean in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Next, it treats the role of that theatre in Allied and U. S. naval strategy in the Second World War. Third, this study sketches the origins of the Cold War in Europe between the United States and the Soviet Union and considers in great detail the influence of these events on the first postwar American strategic war plan, PINCHER. For U. S. Navy strategists, a PINCHER war exposed the importance of the oil of the Middle East and the buffering positions of Turkey and Greece. In order, then, the paper explains the nature and critical quality of the instabilities which wracked these states in the immediate postwar world and the remnant of a British commitment to their defense against external aggression or internal subversion. The bulk of the paper is devoted to an account of early American postwar naval activity in the Eastern Mediterranean, the abrupt ending of British aid

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to Greece and Turkey, and the decisions in Washington which led to a sharp surge of American naval presence in those waters in support of a new and more "forward" foreign policy. Lastly, the study describes the instant resolution of the crises within the context of American strategic planning and naval activity.

From the research undertaken for this paper, two great themes have emerged. First, postwar American strategists and foreign policymakers reacted to hostile moves by the Soviets with great hesitancy since they lacked sufficient force to uphold a policy of greater stiffness. The vaunted American "nuclear monopoly" meant little in the near term in the context of a PINCHER war. And beyond this asset, priceless in a protracted war, the conventional ground and air forces of the Western wartime Allies suffered from tremendous inferiority by comparison with those of the Soviets. The second theme is the enduring utility of naval power, and its richness and flexibility. To this ancient arm of pressure and coercion the Americans turned when the threat to their now-distant and new perimeter of security was threatened.

This study does not address the central issue of "responsibility" for the initiation of the Cold War;



its terms of reference are too constricted to add materially to either of the conflicting theses. Nor did the research for the paper answer one question which was posed in the initial hypothesis: Did the postwar U. S. Navy, bereft of naval "enemies" after the surrender in Tokyo Bay, exploit the crisis in Greece and Turkey in order to justify its existence in the American arsenal? Evidence which suggests an answer to this latter question may exist. I did not find it.

Lastly, the reader should be aware of the preliminary character of this paper. Time and space prevented the exploration of a number of matters pertinent to the essential story. The activities of the Naval Sections of the Aid Missions to both Greece and Turkey and the evolution of PINCHER planning subsequent to the establishment of Sixth Task Fleet are obviously the most immediate subjects in need of further research. I intend to undertake this research in my graduate studies.

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PREFACE

When the opportunity to apply for the Trident Scholar Program at the U. S. Naval Academy in the Spring of 1977, I desired to undertake a Trident project and began searching for an appropriate subject. I have a major in History and a particular interest in European affairs. I desired to integrate that interest with the U. S. Navy and the Soviet Union to arrive at a recent, applicable and relevant history topic for a project at the Naval Academy. Eventually, the origins of the Sixth Fleet was the topic chosen and it fit perfectly.

While researching the paper, through recently declassified documents, I became aware of the strategic importance of the Middle East and how Mideastern oil affected diplomatic and military moves by the American Government in the late-1940's. The Soviet threat to the Middle East thus looms large in strategic planning or diplomatic documents from those years. I hope that I have uncovered the reasoning behind a strong naval presence in the Mediterranean and how the origin of that presence was related to strategic and diplomatic considerations. I feel that this naval contribution to our national security was extremely important.

I would like to thank all the people who have helped me by giving me words of advice or directing me to particular sources. I want to thank the people at the Operational Archives Section of the Naval History Division who not only put up with me, but guided my research to new fields. Of course, special recognition must go to the faculty of the History Department at the Naval Academy, and in particular to Assistant Professor Robert William Love, Jr. whose painstaking guidance was the cornerstone of my being able to complete this project.



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BACKGROUND

Before the Second World War, statesmen had long considered the Mediterranean a British lake. British interest in the Eastern Mediterranean dated from the late 18th century and centered upon imperial trade with the Levant. However, it was only during the Napoleonic Wars that Britain gained a position as the dominant Great Power in the Mediterranean basin. At the Battle of Aboukir Bay in August 1798, a British fleet under Admiral Lord Nelson destroyed a French fleet which supported Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. British forces thereafter seized Egypt from the remnants of the French army which remained in the area. Britain's seizure of the Ionian Islands and Malta in the Central Mediterranean during the Napoleonic Wars, as well as Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805, left the Royal Navy as the undisputed ruler of the high seas and established a continuing British political, military and naval presence in the Mediterranean. Of the Great Powers, Britain's influence in the region remained paramount over the next century and a half.

London quickly employed this mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean to chart the course of Near Eastern politics. From 1822 to 1829, British sterling and supplies aided Greek nationalists in their successful

bid for independence from the Ottoman Turks. When the ruler of Egypt, Mohamet Ali, sent a fleet to aid his suzerain, the Turkish Sultan, in the war, the Royal Navy, with the help of naval units from other European powers, destroyed the Muslim force at Navarino Bay. The naval, financial, and moral support of Britain for Greece created close ties between the two nations, which continued into the twentieth century.

In the later half of the nineteenth century, the British reversed their foreign policy and began to support the maintenance of Turkey although not at the expense of the Greeks. At first, British support was intended to frustrate the expansion of Austria-Hungary into the Balkans. Later, the British supported Turkey to counter a Russian drive for the use or possession of the Straits; this latter conflict was only a part of a worldwide Russian-British struggle for imperial influence and Eurasian territory. In 1854, Russia attacked Turkey. Britain, allied with France and the Italian Kingdom of Piedmont, resorted to force of arms and engaged the Russians in a disastrous war in the Crimea which thwarted the Czar's objectives. In 1878, Britain again acted in the Ottoman's behalf after the Turks had suffered another defeat at the hands of the



Russians. The Czar had imposed punitive peace on the Turks, yet a British naval demonstration in the Straits induced the Russian autocracy to submit to the arbitration of the Great Powers at a Congress in Berlin. At this conference, Russian gains from the war were drastically reduced while Britain, not even a belligerent, received the island of Cyprus as compensation for her agreement to the settlement.

American involvement in the Eastern Mediterranean also dated from the mid-18th century. Before the War of American Independence, United States merchant ships plied the Mediterranean and traded with the Levant and North Africa. American involvement in missionary activities in the Middle East also gradually grew in importance. In the Washington and Adams administrations, the Mediterranean became a major concern of the United States government. The United States Navy owed its establishment to the 1794 dispute with the Barbary Corsairs. The subsequent Tripolitan Wars led to American naval expeditions being undertaken from 1801 to 1815 to safeguard American trade in the Mediterranean. American naval strategies in the Tripolitan Wars suggested the willingness of the United States Government to employ force in support of a foreign policy of

freedom of the seas for maritime commerce. The limited character of American involvement was reflected in the nature of the wars. More important to the young nation was the illustration of the utility of sea power as an arm of foreign policy. Conclusion of the Tripolitan wars in 1815 with the two expeditions led by Commodores Stephen Decatur and William Bainbridge enhanced American national prestige and sovereignty in the eyes of the Powers of Europe.

Following the Tripolitan Wars the Navy Department maintained a Mediterranean Squadron to protect and promote American commerce. Though composed mainly of frigates and brigs, the Squadron frequently included one of the new large ships-of-the-line that the United States had begun to build. The Independence, which sailed under Bainbridge, was the first of these American battleships to enter the Mediterranean. Commodore John Rodgers later sailed in the North Carolina to pressure the Ottoman Turks to negotiate a new commercial treaty.<sup>1</sup> Basing its operations at Port Mahon on the British Island of Minorca, the Squadron continuously operated until the eve of the Civil War. Duty

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Navy Department, The Battleship in the United States Navy (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division, 1970), pp. 5-6.

with the Mediterranean Squadron was prized by Navy officers and men and liberty ports included such exotic places as Naples, Constantinople and Alexandria. Naval Historian Nathan Miller wrote that "the officers found opportunities to inspect the relics of vanished civilizations and to attend balls and parties given by hospitable local aristocrats. Sailors found their way to harborside taverns where there was no lack of feminine companionship."<sup>2</sup>

For the first half of the 19th century, American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire caused little friction between the two nations. In fact, in 1862, when two American missionaries were killed, Turkish authorities tracked down the murderers so quickly that President Lincoln presented the Gran Vizier two silver pistols as a token of Washington's appreciation. However, beginning in the late 1870's, Turkish authorities increasingly began to officially ignore increasing indigenous violence against western Christian missionaries. By 1895, these outrages had escalated to the point that the United States Government dispatched the

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<sup>2</sup>The U. S. Navy: An Illustrated History (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1977) p. 118.



cruisers San Francisco and Marblehead to Turkish ports, including Smyrna and Beirut, to signal American concern. The Americans had borrowed the British tactic of using naval presence in the Mediterranean to influence politics in the Ottoman Empire after finding that unarmed diplomacy failed often to yield satisfactory results.<sup>3</sup>

With the commissioning of the Chicago in 1889, the United States immediately sent that ship, and her sisters, Atlanta and Boston, plus the gunboat Yorktown on a cruise in European waters.<sup>4</sup> With a small army unable to influence Continental politics, Washington began to send visiting naval units to European ports to gain recognition as a Great Power. In 1901, a permanent European Squadron was established, consisting of four warships. Two years later, Rear Admiral Charles S. Cotton, commander of the European Squadron in the

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<sup>3</sup>William James Hourihan, Roosevelt and the Sultans: The United States Navy in the Mediterranean, 1904, Diss. University of Massachusetts, 1975 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 19.

Mediterranean, participated in a celebration at Marseilles in April and May to honor the French President upon his return from Algiers.<sup>5</sup> The German government was wary of the close Franco-American ties that might develop out of the naval visit to Marseilles, and insisted upon an American presence at the Kaiser's next summer naval review at Kiel. President Theodore Roosevelt, who exercised careful control over all naval movements, sent the European Squadron, reinforced by the new battleship Kearsarge to Kiel. Thereafter, Britain also requested an American naval visit and Cotton was sent to Portsmouth as well. Following the end of this diplomatic cruise, which established American naval influence in European politics and led to increasing recognition by Europe of the enhanced status of the United States, the Kearsarge steamed back to the United States and the European Squadron returned to Beirut in the Eastern Mediterranean. There, wrote historian William Hourihan, it spent the

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<sup>5</sup>Seward W. Livermore, American Naval Development 1898-1914, with Special Reference to Foreign Affairs, Diss. Harvard University, 1943 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 1943), p. 865.

rest of the year "engaging in the not so subtle use of naval diplomacy in wringing concessions from Turkey."<sup>6</sup>

"Wringing concessions from Turkey" was, by the turn of the century, an international pastime of the Great Naval Powers. In fact, the history of American and British naval presence in the Mediterranean tended to center on the application of pressure either for or against Turkey. Most European nations had already settled the question of their missionary schools in Turkey but Americans in the Near East still lacked treaty protection with the Porte. To protect their schools in Turkey, the French had resorted to the seizure of the Turkish island of Mytilene in the Aegean. In America, 1904 was an election year, and President Roosevelt saw the partisan benefits to be gained by acting strongly to gain a favorable settlement on the missionary issue for the United States. In May 1904, the Secretary of State John Hay notified the American Minister at Constantinople that the Navy would soon dispatch a fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean. The fleet included the Battle Squadron of six battleships, the European Squadron of three cruisers,

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<sup>6</sup>Hourihan, p. 21.



and the South Atlantic Squadron of two cruisers and two gunboats. This force was anchored at Lisbon, preparing to enter the Mediterranean, when the Perdicaris incident erupted. An American citizen was kidnapped in Morocco, and the United States government disapproved of the way the Sultan handled the affair and sent the five cruisers and the gunboats to put pressure on his government. This left only the six battleships to proceed into the Eastern Mediterranean. However, when the Battle Squadron arrived in Athens their proximity to the Straits unnerved the Turkish Sultan and his government acceded to Washington's demands for a treaty on American missionary schools.<sup>7</sup>

Following this wielding of Roosevelt's "big stick," further American naval involvement in the Mediterranean came in 1908 as the Great White Fleet on its round the world cruise passed through the Sea on its way from the Orient to the Atlantic and the United States. Some units of the fleet, including the battleship Missouri, visited Smyrna. Later, the Missouri and the battleship Ohio put into Piraeus. Six years later, as World

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<sup>7</sup>Hourihan, p. 22.

War I erupted, the battleship Idaho was steaming in the Mediterranean on a midshipmen training cruise. The American government had sold the Idaho to Greece and the battleship Maine came out to retrieve the midshipmen. The Maine exited the Mediterranean with her searchlights bathing the ship, and especially the American flag, at night to identify the ship as a neutral as the darkened Allied warships searched frantically for the German battlecruiser Goeben. At the end of World War I, the U. S. Navy became again heavily involved in the Eastern Mediterranean. The American High Commissioner to Turkey, Rear Admiral Mark Bristol, was posted to Istanbul with a naval force to protect American property and interests during the Chanak War between Greece and Turkey. Bristol's force included a number of destroyers, the cruisers Pittsburgh and St. Louis and a visit by the battleship Arizona. The Arizona's visit to Istanbul was the first presence of an American battleship inside the Straits, and not since Rodgers and Decatur had taken their warships to Constantinople in the early 1800's had such a powerful component of the U. S. fleet visited that Capital. Arizona also visited Smyrna, causing the city's inhabitants to panic and flee the city fearing that the giant battleship would

bombard the city. Smyrna was a Greek city in Asia Minor and with Bristol's presence in Istanbul and the Arizona's arrival at Smyrna, the Greeks thought that the United States had entered the war against them. Nonetheless, Bristol remained quite neutral throughout the Chanak War and defended the interests of other neutral powers in Turkey as well as American interests. With the collapse of the White cause in the Russian Civil War, Bristol's force helped to maintain tranquility in Istanbul as that city became a center for displaced Russians. Following the Chanak War, Bristol's force dwindled to a handful of destroyers and smaller vessels in the late 1920's. Finally, peace brought stability to Turkey to the extent that Bristol's force was dissolved and he was recalled in 1929.<sup>8</sup>

The U. S. Navy before the Second World War prepared no strategic plans involving American naval operations in the Mediterranean. The primary American naval prewar interest centered in the Pacific in a war against Japan. The Navy's interwar plan ORANGE had no

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<sup>8</sup>Admiral H. K. Hewitt, Oral History Transcript, Special Collections Section, U. S. Naval Academy Library; Dr. Henry P. Beers, "U. S. Naval Detachment in Turkish Waters, 1919-1924," Administrative Reference Service Report No. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Records Administration, Administrative Office, Navy Department, June 1943), pp. 5-12.



place in it for a Mediterranean campaign, being concerned exclusively with the defense or recapture of the Philippines and the naval defeat of Japan. When American belligerency with Japan and Germany did come in December 1941, the U. S. Navy still put most of its heavy forces into the Pacific Theater. The U. S. Pacific Fleet was all that held back the Imperial Japanese Navy in the early stages of the war. Also, all American naval officers felt a need to erase the stain of Pearl Harbor by inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Japanese fleet.

For the institutional Navy, the war against Germany was of only secondary interest. While President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed a strategy of "Germany first" because of the awesome war potential of the Third Reich, the nature of the war in Europe meant that the U. S. Navy would play only a secondary role in that theatre. Only in the anti-submarine campaign, essential to a victory in the wider war, did the Navy have a dominant role, but this involved a defensive type of operations unpopular with career officers. Throughout the campaign in Europe, the Navy was anxious to defeat Germany quickly and transfer its assets to the Pacific theater to finish the war with Japan.

In December 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the British, and the Joint Chiefs--including the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Ernest J. King--agreed upon GYMNAST, a combined operation to seize Dakar in French West Africa. GYMNAST would enhance ASW operations and preempt a feared German stroke in the area. However, reverses in the Pacific Theatre forced the allies to cancel GYMNAST and search for an alternative. Hoping to quickly end the war in Europe, the Navy tended to favor a strategy of concentration and direct approach. Because of this, the Navy discounted the Army's proposal of SLEDGEHAMMER and favored immediate initiation of ROUNDUP. SLEDGEHAMMER was planned as an invasion of the continent in 1942 with the aim of securing a foothold from which to launch ROUNDUP, a general offensive in 1943 aimed at the German industrial heartland which would bring the defeat of the Nazi regime. The allies realized that two things could force them to undertake SLEDGEHAMMER immediately though. One was an imminent collapse of Russia. The allies would land hoping to take German pressure off Russia by diverting German forces to Western Europe. The other was an imminent collapse of Germany. The allies would then be forced to land to prevent the Red Army from swallowing all of Europe. While the U. S. Navy pressed

for ROUNDUP, the British convinced President Roosevelt to forego any continental operations in 1942, given deficiencies in ocean-going landing craft, such as LST's, which were essential to major amphibious operations. Further, they argued, the superiority of German panzer units over green American units in 1942 would spell the death of any attempts to land and hold a beach on the French coast for eight months under a German seige.

With the collapse of SLEDGEHAMMER, Roosevelt insisted that the American Army meet German forces somewhere. Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed TORCH, an invasion of North Africa. Seeing their hopes for a quick defeat of Germany die because of a lack of landing craft, Navy planners gave amphibious construction top priority. However, this priority changed as the ferocious German U-boat campaign forced the allies to give top priority to destroyer escorts and other anti-submarine units. The British had been following a peripheral strategy since the fall of France in 1940, and the landing craft shortage was an excuse to continue it. After the successful completion of the campaign in North Africa, Sicily was the logical choice of the allies for a followup operation to clear the Mediterranean for their shipping. Allied planners in 1943



avored the invasion of Sicily since deficiencies in landing craft for an invasion of northern France persisted. Also, they claimed that the Germans were still too strong on the ground to risk the invasion anyway. Beyond Sicily, the British offered Italy as an alternative to ROUNDUP, citing the area as the "soft underbelly" of Europe, and the imminence of an Italian surrender. The campaign in Italy required a sizable allied fleet and drew the U. S. Navy into the Mediterranean even further while the CNO did not want to operate there. Because of the large allied naval presence in the Mediterranean, when the invasion of northern France finally came in June 1944, the allies were able also to land in southern France in August to support the Normandy operations. The invasion of southern France was the U. S. Navy's largest effort in the Mediterranean during the war. The three battleships, Nevada, Texas, and Arkansas, and numerous cruisers and destroyers provided fire support for the landings.

Curiously, Churchill's proposed Mediterranean strategies included operations to seize Rhodes and the Aegean Islands. This was simply an extension of his peripheral strategies similar to his earlier calls for allied invasions of Norway. The Germans placed

credence in the possibility of a Greek invasion and reinforced the area with strong units from Russia at the same time that the Germans were engaged in the titanic Battle of Kursk and the allies were preparing to invade Sicily. Later, Churchill attempted to kill the invasion of Southern France in favor of a landing in Yugoslavia and a drive on Central Europe through the Lubjanja Gap. This was aimed primarily at keeping the Russians, who Churchill had ALWAYS distrusted, from unilateral occupation of southeastern Europe. Churchill, as well as his American allies, developed varying strategies against Germany with an eye to the postwar complexion of European politics. The Prime Minister had long baited the Bolsheviks to domestic political advantage. During and shortly after World War I, as Secretary of State for War, he had sponsored British military intervention in support of the Whites in the Russian Civil War. However, neither his own Chiefs of Staff nor his senior allies approved of a Balkan strategy. The British military hoped to limit their casualties while the Americans retained their inflexible

focus on northwestern industrial Europe as the key to a western victory.<sup>9</sup>

Churchill's plan for a Balkan campaign did lead, nonetheless, to the deployment of British forces to liberate Nazi occupied Greece. In December 1944, the British landed in Greece as the Germans were withdrawing, reinforcing a Greco-British tie which had been forged in the Greek War of Independence in the 1820's and had led Britain to attempt to defend Greece when the Nazi armies seized that country in 1941. The liberation of Greece led directly to a war between the British forces under General Scobie and leftist guerrillas. The battle around Athens was particularly intense and forced Scobie to use his own troops, a mountain brigade of the Greek Army in exile and support from the cruiser Orion to clear the city of the rebels. The United States Government refused to become involved in this conflict, a purely British affair. In fact, when Admiral King discovered that American LST's were carrying supplies to Piraeus for the British to use in Greece, he ordered the practice

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<sup>9</sup>Martin Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966-1978), Vol. IV, pp. 257-383.



ended immediately. Churchill's personal appeal to Roosevelt, though, led to the transfer of seven LST's from the U. S. Navy to the Royal Navy so that the supply missions could be continued.<sup>10</sup>

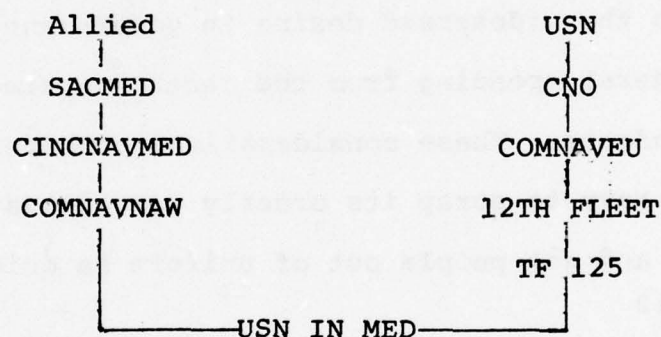
#### POSTWAR NAVY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Late in the Second World War, as the campaign moved toward Germany and the fighting intensified in the Pacific Theater, the Admiral King reorganized U. S. Navy forces in the Mediterranean to reflect their declining importance. In February, 1945, the Navy established the 8th Fleet under Admiral Hewitt to control American naval units in the Mediterranean. Admiral Hewitt was also Commander Naval Forces North African Waters (COMNAVNAW) which gave him control of the naval shore installations and air bases in North Africa that supported the 8th Fleet and other allied naval units. In the spring of 1945, the Navy anticipated the imminent German surrender and began to shift

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<sup>10</sup> Naval Message from Naval Attaché, Athens to CNO 9 Dec 1944, RG218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Leahy File #35, Modern Military Section, National Archives, Washington, D. C.; James Henry Pedersen, Focal Point of Conflict: The United States and Greece, 1943-1947, Diss. University of Michigan, 1974 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1974), pp. 103-110.

American naval units to the Pacific to augment the Pacific Fleet for the final offensive against Japan. As a result of this redeployment, King disestablished the 8th Fleet in April, 1945, and the small forces remaining in the Mediterranean were formed into a task force (TF125) commanded by Rear Admiral Glassford. TF125 was a part of the 12th Fleet which has previously only operated in Northern European waters but now included all naval units in Europe. American naval units in the Mediterranean now fell under a dual Allied-American chain of command as follows:<sup>11</sup>



The Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945 brought intense domestic political pressure in the United States for a rapid demobilization. When the war ended, twelve million Americans were in

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<sup>11</sup> Command File, World War II, History of Task Force 125, Operational Archives, Naval History Division, Washington, D. C.

uniform; of this total, seven million were serving overseas. In Washington mail containing "baby booties" with letters from babies begging "bring my daddy home" inundated Congress and the White House. Nonviolent mutinies and demonstrations in military units overseas added to this mounting to bring the troops home. In Manila 20,000 soldiers marched to demonstrate their demand to return home. Similar events took place throughout the Far East and Europe. A more effective catalyst animating a quick demobilization was the widespread desire in government to reduce Federal spending from the recent wartime deficit budgets. These considerations combined to cause the Navy to scrap its orderly demobilization schedules and get people out of uniform as quickly as possible.<sup>12</sup>

American naval forces overseas quickly became a major victim of the massive demobilization as the high cost of maintaining those forces became difficult to justify with the coming of peace. By December 1945, all American naval forces in the Mediterranean were

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<sup>12</sup> Richard F. Haynes, The Awesome Power: Harry S. Truman as Commander in Chief. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), pp. 118-119.



reduced to one light cruiser and two destroyers in TF125 commanded by Rear Admiral Jules James who had replaced Glassford. Support facilities were continuously being phased out until finally only one airbase and one port were left to support American naval operations in the Mediterranean. The airbase supporting Mediterranean forces throughout the early postwar period was Port Lyautey in French Morocco. Located in a quiet colony of a wartime ally, Port Lyautey enjoyed security and stability while supporting air operations for TF125. James was less satisfied with port facilities for his small force. Glassford had shifted the main base for TF125 from Naples to Palermo on Sicily. He believed that Palermo, being more isolated than Naples, more closely conformed to the Navy's desire to maintain a low profile in postwar Europe. However, after assuming command, James found the facilities at Palermo poor and moved the base for TF125 back to Naples.<sup>13</sup>

World War II had left only three Great Powers in the world; America, Russia and Britain. However,

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<sup>13</sup>History of Task Force 125.

planners foresaw the coming eclipse of British world power. In the immediate postwar period a common aim of the three powers was peace, although their motives differed. The U. S. was animated by idealism and commercial interest. Britain was financially exhausted and could wage war no more. Russia desired peace to rebuild their nation from the destruction caused by four years of battling the bulk of the German Army on Russian soil. American goals were bound to clash with those of the other powers. Washington wanted an end to the spheres of influence and to open markets in Europe and the colonial world for free trade. This policy was suspect since the United States insisted on maintaining its own sphere of influence in Latin America. In addition, the American industrial plant had survived the war intact and American business could quickly capture newly opened overseas markets. Britain's postwar hopes were entirely different. She had ruled most of the world through the observance of spheres of influence, and believed such arrangements stabilized international relations. In October 1944, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had agreed with Soviet leader Josef Stalin to carve up the Balkans; thus, British forces had entered Greece with the approval of

the Soviets in December 1944. The American concept of free trade had no place in Britain's plans for postwar financial recovery. British businessmen intended to expand their industrial production by the maintenance of the British Empire and their system of Imperial Preference. Since these aims ran directly counter to American hopes, many Americans eyed Britain suspiciously and for a short time toyed with the notion that Britain would threaten the general peace. For their part, the Russians identified four pressing goals. The first was to reconstruct their shattered nation, no country in World War II had absorbed more damage or casualties than the Soviet Union. The second was to consolidate their sphere of influence over Eastern Europe. In both World Wars, Germany had invaded Russia through the Eastern Europe and Stalin was obsessed with avoiding a recurrence. A third Russian goal was to expand communism and Soviet foreign power. Although hampered by war time destruction the Soviets expected the political and economic



dislocation following the war to provide them with opportunities to advance their power at the expense of the West.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of Anglo-American economic differences, U. S. Army and Navy strategic planners identified the Soviet Union as their only probable opponent in a Third World War. Soviet-American relations deteriorated quickly following the victory over Nazi Germany. Relations between the two nations had never been particularly good, either before or during the war and removal of a common enemy exposed antipathy and destroyed hopes of cooperation. Attempts by Americans to improve relations went as far back at 1933 and Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration as President. Roosevelt tried to gain Russia's friendship by extending recognition to the Soviet regime. American businessmen applauded recognition because in the midst of the depression they hoped to begin recovery by producing for the vast Russian market. The Soviet government was jubilant at now being eligible for Western loans and hoped to gain credits for technological development.

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<sup>14</sup>George F. Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), p. 552-554.

However enthusiastic Roosevelt was to cooperate with the Soviets, the American military establishment was still extremely wary of the Soviet regime. Following recognition and the establishment of normal relations between the two nations, in 1936 the Red Navy approached the U. S. government hoping to gain access to advanced naval technology. Specifically the Russians wanted to order a 65,000 ton battleship and two destroyers as well as materials for two more battleships and the plans to build a carrier from American shipbuilding firms, and in 1937 recieved President Roosevelt's support in their endeavors to secure the ships. Roosevelt had reorganized the State Department to lessen apposition to his rapproachment with the Soviet Union, yet Navy officials were beyond his reach. Naval resistance to the sale of warships was led by Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Naval Operations, Rear Admiral W. R. Furlong, Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, and Rear Admiral Ralston S. Holmes, Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence. Leahy in particular considered the Soviet Union dangerous to the United States and at first refused to agree. Later, Roosevelt discussed his endorsement of the sale with Leahy and the Admiral gave in officially. However, those responsible for delaying tactics beneath

Leahy in the Navy never received any reprimand for their actions to thwart the policy of the President. The heart of the official Navy objection to the project was that the sale of ships to the Soviets would reveal military secrets.<sup>15</sup>

Navy footdragging continued throughout 1938. In June Stalin even took the step of speaking with the American Ambassador in Moscow about the ship contracts. Stalin ordinarily did not ever see ambassadors, insisting he was a party official, not a member of the government. Though the Roosevelt administration renewed its efforts to push through the sale, shipbuilding firms even cancelled those contracts that the Soviets had managed to get as the U. S. Navy let out word that those firms working on Soviet contracts would encounter serious difficulties in obtaining future Navy contracts. The Soviets then changed their tactics and began laying down battleship hulls

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<sup>15</sup>Thomas R. Maddux, "United States-Soviet Naval Relations in the 1930's: The Soviet Union's Efforts to Purchase Naval Vessels," *Naval War College Review* Vol. XXIX, No. 2 (Fall, 1976), pp. 28-37; Robert Waring Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1968), pp. 36-46.



in Russian yards. However they still needed advanced components such as large caliber guns, fire control equipment and armor plate from the United States. Frustration over the U. S. Navy's obstructionist tactics even led the Soviets to attempt to buy French guns for their battleships but this also fell through and the Soviets returned to searching the American market. The Roosevelt administration eventually would have pushed the project though and Stalin would have received his capital ships, Roosevelt even issued orders to "start clubbing the resisting naval officers over the head." By late 1938 the Navy had been forced to approve a 45,000 ton battleships to be built in America and sold to Russia, and by 1939 planning for the battleship was underway and arguing over the plans for two destroyers was all the Navy could do. It took the outbreak of World War II and Stalin's cooperation with Hitler in September 1939 for the Navy to finally see to it that the contracts with the Soviet Union were all killed. The enmity felt in the Navy for the Soviet Union is clearly apparent because of this incident. In particular, the feelings of Admiral Leahy are well illustrated and would later again obstruct the Soviet Union.

When World War II came to both nations in 1941, senior military officers of America and the Soviet Union were still wary of each other's intentions, even though they were allies. The Soviets refused to allow Western naval units to operate from Murmansk except to participate in convoys. No Western air units were allowed to fly support for convoys from Russian air bases, and the Soviet Air Force could not take up the slack. Further, even though the Red Army was being mauled by the Germans up to the end of 1942, the Soviets refused to admit U. S. ground units to the Russian Front even though the untried American Army needed experience fighting German units. The U. S. Navy in particular was always suspicious of Soviet intentions. The distrustful former CNO, Admiral Leahy, was now Chief of Staff to the President (Roosevelt) where he served throughout the war as the senior American officer on active duty. The Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, also considered Soviet motives strongly suspect throughout the war, and was an advocate of making strong counters to Soviet moves that the U. S. government disliked.

Even before the end of World War II, the American military began to distrust the Soviet Union to one point that this distrust heavily affected military

operations against Germany. Planners of the major landings in Northern France determined that two events would quickly bring about the invasion. The first was that should it seem that Russia's collapse was imminent, the Western Allies would have to invade hoping to divert some of Germany's strength and keep Russia in the war. The second was that should Germany's fall appear imminent, the Western Allies would have to invade in order to keep the Soviet Union from seizing all of Europe. This last could have been what actually happened. In May 1944, one month before the Normandy invasion, the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted the "phenomenal surge" in Soviet power which would be the result upon the anticipated victory over Germany. When British and American forces did invade in June, German strength was only a shadow of what it had been after three years of war in Africa and on the Russian Front, and Russian units were on the outskirts of Warsaw preparing for the offensive which carried them to the gates of Berlin.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Walter S. Poole, "From Conciliation to Containment: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Coming of the Cold War, 1945-1946," Military Affairs Vol. XLII, No. 1 (February, 1978), pp. 12-16.



With the winding down of the war in Europe, open rifts began to appear in U. S.-Soviet relations. In April, 1945, the State Department was already complaining that the Soviets were not keeping to the Yalta agreements about Poland. After Germany surrendered in May, the first East-West crisis broke out at Trieste between the Western Allies and the Yugoslav forces of Tito over control of that city. The British, expecting Tito to claim the province of Venezia Giulia and the city of Trieste from Italy, had raised the issue of international boundaries in that area at Yalta, but the issue had simply been put off by the United States and Russia. In May 1945, upon the surrender of Germany, Tito began moving his partisans into the region and claimed it for Yugoslavia by right of conquest. At Churchill's urging, American and British ground forces moved into Trieste. Faced with an overwhelming Anglo-American superiority the partisans withdrew from the region.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. Stephen G. Xydis, The American Naval Visits to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in 1946: Their Impact on American-Soviet Relations. A Case Study of the Functions of Modern Sea Power in Peacetime Foreign Policy, Diss. Columbia University 1956 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), pp. 113-116.

The U. S. Navy also had reason for concern with Soviet intentions when at the Potsdam Conference and again at the London peace talks the Soviets demanded a trusteeship over the former Italian colonies of Tripolitania (Libya) and the Dodecanese Islands in the Aegean. These colonies were demanded as reparations in return for the damages caused by an Italian Army which had fought in Russia alongside the Germans. The Joint Chiefs of Staff's opinion of these demands was that the Soviets were attempting to gain a strategic position from which they could interdict allied lines of communication with the Middle East.<sup>18</sup> In the event of a war with Russia, Soviet aircraft operating from bases in the Dodecanese or Libya could close the Eastern Mediterranean to Allied shipping, and seriously endanger Allied air and sea operations directed against the Russian mainland. Naval planners were frantic about the possibility of a Soviet presence on Mediterranean shores. The State Department, understanding the Navy's fears, refused to give in to the Soviets and fought the issue for ten months. Finally in June 1946, the Soviets were forced to

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<sup>18</sup>Poole, p. 15.

settle with the Italian government for \$100 million in reparations for the damage caused in Russia by Italian units. The Navy's analysis of the Soviet demands in December, 1945, held ominous portents:

In their present dealings with the Western Powers, the Russians are using their position as a victorious nation to take whatever they can without coming into actual conflict with the West. Outside the ring of nations on their immediate borders they call for joint trusteeships or a share of the spoils. They make concessions, but every concession is more than balanced by a new demand.<sup>19</sup>

With the final break more than a year away yet, both the Soviet and the Western governments began to declare their opposing positions. In an election speech on 9 February 1946, Stalin had all but declared war on the West. Proclaiming that peace was impossible with the capitalist powers, Stalin announced a rearmament program which would push industrial and armaments expansion while foregoing consumer goods. Stalin claimed that because of the imminent postwar depression in the capitalist world, Britain and America would soon be fighting each other, and that

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<sup>19</sup>OP-30 Files, A-8 Intelligence 1946, Box 106 (Article entitled Basic Factors in World Relations, pp. 13-14, prepared by the Office of Naval Intelligence, December 1945), Naval History Division.



the chance for communism to finally complete its destruction of capitalism was soon coming. This speech soon came to be called Stalin's "Declaration of World War III" within the American government.

Before Stalin's speech could be finally digested, the charge in Moscow, George Kennan, sent an 8,000 word telegram to the State Department on 15 February 1946 on the subject of Russia's attitudes and goals. This telegram was sent in response to questions asked of him by the State Department, and by coincidence Kennan's completion of the document happened to follow so soon after Stalin's speech. Kennan's main thrust was that the Soviets were out to gain what they could in the postwar period, to expand their power. Further Kennan said that the Soviets considered the U. S. an implacable enemy.

We have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the U. S. there can be no permanent "modus vivendi," that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>George Kennan as quoted in James Forrestal, The Forrestal Diaries (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p. 138.

Kennan felt that the Western Allies could control the Soviets by showing strength, firmness and cohesion. Importantly, he fell short of advocating military confrontation. Kennan's views soon began circulating in Washington and began to form a touchstone of American policy discussion.

Kennan had been beaten in reaction time by an old hand at opposing the Soviets, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Following World War I and the Russian Revolution, Churchill had advocated sending a large Allied military force to clean out the Soviets, and in the intervening thirty years his anti-Soviet stance had not changed. On 10 February 1946, the day after Stalin's speech, Churchill, about to give a speech at a small college in Fulton, Missouri, conferred with President Harry S. Truman about the contents of the speech. On 5 March, Churchill, after being introduced by Truman, delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech.

It was, in essence, a reply to Stalin's speech and a call to arms for the Western world. The Cold War had been declared, the battle joined. It was March 1946, and events moved rapidly that month, as the Cold War began its dance from crisis to crisis. Churchill, as he related to Forrestal, was very satisfied at the initial reactions to his speech.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the period of American disillusionment with the Soviet Union, the American armed forces continued to make war plans for a possible Third World War. A Joint Planning Staff existed under the aegis of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Strategic planners identified the Soviet Union as the only potential major enemy of the United States. Navy inputs into strategic planning included numerous calls for a peacetime naval presence in the Mediterranean. Among the papers submitted advocating such a presence were two written by Captains Arleigh Burke and Robert Carney, both of whom eventually became CNO's. Calls for a large presence in the Mediterranean noted the important geographic position of that sea. The Mediterranean borders the Middle East, an area rich in

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<sup>22</sup>Forrestal, p. 146.



oil that was needed for the industry of Western Europe and America, industry whose output was depended upon to eventually defeat the Soviet Union. A naval force in the Mediterranean also can be used to outflank enemy forces or protect the flank of a friendly force which is anywhere near the coasts of Europe or the Mideast. That naval force can attack at will a long and hard to defend southern European coastline. And further, carrier aircraft with a 500 mile range, and such planes were already being designed in 1946, operating off carriers in the Mediterranean and carrying atom bombs can easily reach many military targets in the Ukraine as well as naval targets along the Black Sea coast.

Advocates of a peacetime naval presence in the Mediterranean argued that in the event of war American forces would have to operate there, so prepositioning such forces would enhance American ability to defeat the Soviet Union. In times of tension, attempting to move a strong force into the Mediterranean where none already existed would only heighten tension even further, while a force already there would be no problem. While naval planners strongly desired a powerful naval presence in the Mediterranean, such a

presence was refused by the Truman Administration because of budget constraints. President Truman had upon the end of World War II instituted a "remainder" system of budgeting for the armed forces. The "remainder" system meant that every other agency of the federal government was taken care of first, and then whatever revenues were left over went to the armed forces. For fiscal year 1946 this meant only \$11 billion were given to the Army, Navy and Air Force to operate on. While all of the services consistently tried to get around the budget, Truman proclaimed the Navy the worst offender after he caught the Navy secretly stockpiling strategic materials for its own use. Truman stuck to his budget above all else. In August 1946, when a crisis in the Mediterranean brought on unexpected naval operations and thus unexpected expenses, Forrestal insisted that staying within the budget meant cutting something else that had already been planned and would threaten national security. Truman refused him.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956) p. 34.

An even more implacable enemy of the Navy's planners than Truman's budget was the Air Force. With victory in World War II largely attributed to close cooperation between the services, and in an effort to avoid duplication of efforts, a move began in 1946 for unification of the armed services. The Navy opposed unification and fought it with all its energy. The Air Force was demanding control over all aircraft, and the Army over all ground units in the new unified service. The Navy refused to part with its naval aircraft or the Marines. The Air Force felt that the advent of Atomic bombs rendered a Navy obsolete anyway for anything but transporting material in convoys.

The focus of the debate between the Navy and the Air Force was the employment of Atom bombs on carriers. The Air Force insisted that strategic bombing was its exclusive mission and demanded that the Navy cease its incursions on Air Force prerogatives. Since the Air Force controlled the production of atomic bombs, it inhibited development of smaller weapons so that the bombs would be too big to fit on carrier aircraft and could fit only on long range bombers. The Navy tried to circumvent that by designing new, larger planes with sufficient range to strike Russia from the



Mediterranean plus a new "super carrier" from which to operate these aircraft. The Air Force accused the Navy of crassly attempting to regain a strategic mission in a major war against the home territory of the Soviet Union. This mission, the Air Force argued, belonged in the realm of "airpower." In effect, the Air Staff argued that, the naval forces were obsolete and that Navy leaders were merely attempting to justify its continued existence of their bloated post-war service. The struggle over armed forces unification and strategies continued beyond the formation of the Department of Defense in 1948. Thereafter, the major issues of war making theories were never settled. Indeed, Truman chose James Forrestal as the first Secretary of Defense to placate a Navy which demanded independence from amalgamation.

Despite the energies expended fighting unification, the postwar Navy continued with its planning. In mid-1946, Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman, Assistant CNO for Strategic Planning (OP30), directed his subordinates to initiate a new series of strategic war plans. Specifically, he insisted that developing a "PINCHER" plan, which involved a "pincher" by attack against Russia from air bases in Britain and from

carriers in the Mediterranean, "is the most pressing business of OP-30."<sup>24</sup>

Within months, Navy and joint plans were integrated war in PINCHER, a master American strategic war plan for World War III. The strategists assumed that a PINCHER war could erupt with the Soviet Union within three years, that allies of the Soviet Union would include the Eastern European bloc of client satellites plus communist Yugoslavia, and that Britain would be closely allied with the U. S. The plan noted that air forces employed in such a conflict would be substantial. American intelligence warned that "the Soviets have a capability of mobilizing up to 10 1/2 million men within 30 days and reaching a peak of 15 million in 150 days." Nonetheless, they modified this alarming prospect with the cautionary note that Russian "mobilization in this instance can mean little more than bringing men under military control with but very little initial effectiveness." In terms of gross armed forces available to Stalin

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<sup>24</sup>Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations, 7 June 1946, Conference with OP-30 on War Planning, AL6-3(5) War Plans 1946, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

and his fellow Soviet leaders in the near term, United States analysts estimated that "next summer the Russians will have a little over three million men in some 208 ground divisions" and "an Air Force of 13,000 combat aircraft manned by 550,000 men." Of special interest to Sherman and U. S. Navy strategists was the calculation that these aggregates would also include a Soviet naval force of 300,000 men manning between 700 and 800 ships and craft. "Again, however, the intelligence officers softened these startling figures by adding that "most" of these naval forces were "of low combat value except for the submarines and motor torpedo boats." In sum, the Red Navy posed no immediate postwar challenge to the sea control exercised by the U. S. Fleet. Nevertheless, Soviet ground and air forces were awesome in size and perfectly configured for the missions American planners assigned to them in a PINCHER war.<sup>25</sup>

American strategists determined that the Soviets would use this air and ground superiority to overrun the American, British, and French occupation zones of

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<sup>25</sup>"Presentation to the President, 14 January 1947, Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman, U. S. Navy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (operations)," CNO Chronological File, Command File, Operational Archives.



Germany; Holland, Belgium, France; Scandanavia; and either Italy or Spain--all this to seize the industrial heart of Western Europe. Following these rapid strokes, the planners envisioned that the Soviets would launch an attack on the British Isles with aircraft and missiles, encircle and blockade Britain with submarines and minefields, and hope to knock the British Empire with its still-vast resources out of the war.

The Navy planners also believed that the Soviets would deploy significant forces in the Middle East to seize oilfields. They assumed that possession of Arab and Iranian oilfields would be the most important initial military objective of both belligerent alliances. They reasoned that "United States petroleum resources may be insufficient for major war after the second year unless supplemented from this area." Moreover, "the loss of Iraq and Iran would mean the loss of 46% of the British peacetime requirements of petroleum products."<sup>26</sup> Without the oil, wartime

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<sup>26</sup>RADM Cato D. Glover, Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations, "Resume of PINCHER Planning," 21 January 1947, Serial 0005P30, A16-3 War Plans 1947, OP-30 Files, Operational Archives.

supplies necessary to run Western industrial plant, eventual victory in a PINCHER war for the West could be questionable. To dominate the Middle East, the American strategists estimated that the Soviets would overrun Turkey and Greece, seize control of the Eastern Mediterranean, and strike into the Mideast. This scenario anticipated a Soviet defeat of the Greek Army of 100,000 men and a Turkish Army of 600,000. Beyond these armies, no other force existed in the area capable of credibly resisting Red Army and Air units. The planners noted that this meant that the Soviets could drive them into the Levant and attempt to wrest the Suez Canal from Britain. Operations in this theater of war were so important--because of the oil--that the Americans theorized that Soviet operations in the Mideast and Southern Europe might even precede hostilities of greater magnitude in Northern Europe. On the other hand, PINCHER foresaw little offensive action in the Far East by the Soviets. The Red Army could occupy Manchuria; Korea below the 38th parallel; and parts of Northern China. Beyond these modest ends, the United States military believed that the Russians would not overextend themselves in a secondary theatre irrelevant to an eventual victory.

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American strategists knew that their forces, at the outset of the war with Russia, would only be capable of defensive operations while the United States mobilized its vast industry and substantial manpower. U. S. Army planners admitted that their ground forces were too small to do much beyond retarding a Soviet offensive until American manpower could be organized. However, the U. S. Air Force enjoyed greater near term potential. The Air Staff expected to eventually drive the Soviet Air Force from the skies of Western Europe. Furthermore, U. S. strategic bombers, armed with atomic bombs, were to be the main means to carry the war to Russian home territory. With B-29's based in Britain, North Africa, and perhaps, India--as well as the B-36's under design which could reach Russia from North America--the Air Force would inflict heavy damage to Soviet industry and military lines of communications. However, the American atomic arsenal in 1946 consisted of less than a half dozen devices. Thus, the planners knew that large scale atomic bombing offensive would have to await accelerated production of these weapons. Meanwhile, a conventional war would rage. In addition to unilateral possession of atomic weapons, a large navy was America's



greatest military asset. Although the Soviet Air Force could mount a challenge to American air superiority, the defeat of the German Kreigs marine and the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Second World War left the U. S. Navy undisputedly the pre-eminent global naval power. The only naval force of significant size was the Royal Navy, and Great Britain closely allied with the United States. However, postwar demobilization forced the U. S. Navy to deactivate a large number of ships; to be fully effective in a PINCHER war the Navy Department would need to activate many of those ships, then in mothballed "reserve."

The U. S. Navy's role in the war against the Soviet Union would begin immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities. Strategists assigned the Navy an offensive mission to destroy sea-going Soviet naval forces and then to secure vital sea lines of communications in the Western Hemisphere, the North and South Atlantic, the Pacific and the Western approaches to Great Britain. American carrier-borne air attacks in the Far East would quickly sink the Soviet Navy in the Pacific. With this primary mission accomplished, American planners proposed to

shift the bulk of their forces to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean where they believed a PINCHER war would be decided. In the absence of American mobilization, the postwar Navy planned to deploy twelve aircraft carriers, mostly in the Pacific Theater. Mobilization schedules would double this figure. Those planning PINCHER proposed to redeploy at least one third of this force, at least eight carriers, to the Mediterranean to check the advance of the Red Army at chokepoints such as the Straits and, secondarily, to provide support to the British in the defense of their position at the Suez Canal. As they studied the broad plans for a PINCHER war, American naval strategists increasingly inclined toward the view that the Mediterranean would become the focal point of Navy operations against the Soviets. They believed that "control of the Eastern Mediterranean Area and the Middle East oil resources" would be "the greatest strategic objective ...for both the Soviets and the United States." A rapid American response to a Soviet thrust would require some consideration of pre-positioning forces, they began to suggest, since the Russians "will probably attempt to seize these objectives immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities." The Joint Planners defined American military objectives in the Area to

include holding a defensive position in the "Suez area, and, if feasible, Cyprus, Crete, Sicily, and to assist Turkey and Greece." The Navy planners then added that they would expect at the start of hostilities to "initiate immediate naval and air warfare of attrition against enemy forces and resources" which threatened the Area. Such a strategy would include the initiation of "a strategic air offensive from bases in the Eastern Mediterranean" as well as an attempt "to maintain lines of communication throughout the Mediterranean." Beyond this, the strategists expected to be able to "prepare to seize control of the Aegean Sea and the Turkish Straits."<sup>27</sup> The suggestion that Navy planners hoped to "prepare to seize" the Aegean and the Straits illustrated that they were considering a strategy which would move from a defensive phase to offensive operations following American mobilization. Such operations would aim at retaking territory conquered by the Red Army and at defeating invading Soviet forces in the air and perhaps even on the ground. Nonetheless, the planners

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<sup>27</sup> RADM Glover, "Resume of War Plan Pincher."



recognized that some of their fundamental assumptions concerning a PINCHER war remained untested. For example, they cautioned with reference to the Mediterranean, that "the necessity of holding or early recapture of this area will depend upon a more complete analysis of British-American petroleum requirements and resources than is now available." Moreover, they also reckoned that such operations would be quite difficult and that their undertaking would be at great cost.

PINCHER clearly demonstrated the importance of the Mediterranean in a future war between the remaining Great Powers. The strategic studies had highlighted the critical character of the area for the American Navy. It was, they concluded, the major "line of communications for the Western Allies from their countries to the Mediterranean and [thus] the most important theater of the war". Finally, they added that the Mediterranean was the only area "where Allied naval and air superiority could be brought to bear against the Soviet Union without being exposed to the full force of the Red Army."

In a PINCHER war, the Mediterranean assumed a new and unexpected prominence for American naval strategists. In areas contiguous to that Sea, the fact that

the "recapture" of the Mediterranean would be "extremely difficult and costly" sparked the first call for a peacetime American naval presence in the Area of a permanent sort. Navy planners believed that an early Allied reaction to a Soviet offensive would reduce the eventual cost in ground forces required in a counteroffensive to throw back the Soviet advance. Nonetheless, plans for prepositioning naval forces in the Area lacked a suitable base in a firm American foreign policy commitment to the defense of the endangered states. Until signs of such a change in policy were forthcoming from the State Department and the Oval Office, little could be accomplished. However, as planning for a PINCHER war proceeded throughout 1946, crises in Iran, Greece, Turkey began to provide the incentives for a reappraisal of foreign policy which coincided with the increasing importance of the Mediterranean in American military thinking.

The Iranian crisis came to the fore shortly after the global conflict ended. The British and Russians had occupied Iran during World War II to secure oil supplies and safeguard the supply line for Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union. Foreign Minister Molotov of the

Soviet Union and the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevan, agreed, at the London Conference of Foreign Ministers in September 1945, to evacuate Iran by March 1946. The United States was virtually ignored on matters concerning Iran at the Conference, having lost all leverage by an earlier withdrawal of American troops. After Stalin's threatening "Declaration of World War III" speech in February 1946, and Churchill's vitriolic reply on March 5th, Soviet troops remained in Northern Iran after the British pulled out. In addition, the Soviets shielded a separate revolutionary government and refused to allow the army of the legitimate Iranian government into the northern area which the Red Army controlled. In March, the Soviets added to this threatening posture by massing troops in the Caucasus, a move American analysts supposed was also directed against the Turks. Only strong diplomatic pressure by Great Britain and the United States forced the Soviets to leave Iran, while a policy of decisive repression enabled the Iranian government to suppress the revolutionary government in Northern Iran, whose continued existence had been the price the Soviets exacted for their military withdrawal. In the event the Iranian parliament had simply waited



upon the Red Army to leave, then refused to ratify their agreement with the Russians.

The crisis in Greece had a much longer history, the origins of which were in the middle of World War II. Greece fell to a German invasion in 1941 despite a major effort by Britain to check the Nazi onslaught. In fact, Churchill stripped three and a half divisions from the British campaign in Libya to defend Greece. While this left the British incapable of completing the conquest of Italian Libya, the traditionally close ties between Britain and Greece were upheld and reinforced. After Germany ousted the British and conquered Greece, a Greek government-in-exile was quickly formed in London around King George. In March 1943 the King and his government moved to Cairo, expecting the allies to quickly undertake the liberation of Greece. To this end, Churchill, throughout the campaign in the Mediterranean consistently advocated-- with no success-- a campaign to take back Rhodes.

Those Greek sailors and soldiers which escaped Greece when it fell formed new units and fought on under British command. Greek sailors manned British made ships and operated in the Mediterranean with the British fleet. However, the Greek army was kept out

of action in North Africa. General Eisenhower preferred to use British and American soldiers in combat operations, though finally in 1944 one brigade of Greek soldiers met the Germans on the battlefield.<sup>28</sup>

A foretaste of the future of Greek politics erupted in 1943 when this Greek Army, loyal to King George, mutinied in his favor when leftist opposition to reimposition of the monarchy surfaced. Within occupied Greece, the resistance movement was fragmented. Each of numerous guerrilla bands paid allegiance to a different ideology. The resistance fighters expended as much, if not more, energy in fractracidal conflict as they did in attacks on German and Italian occupation forces. German commanders in Greece realized this fact and German policies were aimed at keeping the guerrilla bands at each other throats.

The dominant guerrilla group in Greece was EAM/ELAS. EAM was the political arm of the movement and

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<sup>28</sup> Edgar O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 41; James Henry Pedersen, Focal Point of Conflict: The United States and Greece 1943-1947, Diss, University of Michigan, 1974 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1974), p. 49.

ELAS constituted the fighting forces. EAM had as its membership a large body of moderates and leftists, but a Communist minority was acknowledged to hold control of policymaking. ELAS had an even higher ration of moderates; and the commander of ELAS was a non-Communist. Britain backed EAM/ELAS in the early stages of the war and supplied money and weapons to the organization. However, when the British learned that EAM decided to oppose the postwar return of the Greek monarchy London ended support to EAM in 1943 and shifted their patronage to two smaller factions, EDES and EKKA. Both EDES and EKKA were right-wing, arch-reactionary groups, for the British, however, they enjoyed the saving grace of being strongly pro-Royalist.<sup>29</sup>

In 1943, while Axis units still occupied Greece, a civil war broke out into the open between leftist guerrilla groups led by EAM and the rightist bands. Two issues were largely responsible for the civil war: the matter of the restoration of the monarchy upon liberation and the question of which group would accept the surrender of various Italian units in Greece

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<sup>29</sup>Pedersen, p. 106; Ibid, p. 56.



upon Italy's surrender to the Allies. The latter was important since the acceptance of a unit's surrender also involved the confiscation of its weapons. Should one guerrilla faction garner a disproportionate share of the Italian's arms, then it would increase the band's power beyond measure. The 1943 civil war ended when the major guerrilla groups and the government-in-exile in Cairo sent representatives to a conference in Beirut to settle the dispute. Not only was the factional fighting ended, but at Beirut terms were drafted for a new coalition government which included leftist and Royalist cabinet ministers. However, EAM leaders, believing that their representatives had received only minor seats in the government in return for terms which would disarm ELAS, repudiated the Beirut accord and refused to send members to Cairo to take their places in the new government. For the time being, the government did keep EAM's seats vacant; eventually they were filled with leftists not associated with EAM.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> O'Ballance, p. 67; Stephen G. Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947; Prelude to the Truman Doctrine (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963), pp. 36-37.

Civil war broke out again in December 1944, as German forces withdrew from Greece. EAM attempted to seize Athens when the Germans departed. To frustrate this plan, the British had concluded a secret arrangement with the German high command. In return for a copy of the German withdrawal schedule, the British had agreed not to molest the retreating forces. Immediately upon the German withdrawal, the British began to land their Army in Greece. Sixty thousand British troops, including crack parachute regiments and the 4th Indian Division, were put ashore. These units immediately clashed with leftists guerrillas and the British set about to clear Piraeus, Athens and Salonika of EAM forces. The Greek government-in-exile returned to Athens one week after the British had landed. However, the King, a political liability, was left behind and a regency was installed in Athens. Open warfare thereafter raged throughout Greece. Not only were the leftists and British fighting, but other groups struggled for power, or simply sought revenge for wrongs of the past. An armistice concluded at the Varkiza Conference in February 1945, finally ended the fighting. The British and the regency had won, but they downplayed their victory as a "victory for Greece" by establishing a peace. The

government prepared for free elections which were to be held in March 1946, and which were to be overseen by British, French, and American observers.<sup>31</sup>

The Varkiza Truce did not bring an end to Greece's political troubles. Inflation raged unchecked and devastated the economy. In May 1945 the official exchange rate was 150 D (drachmas) = \$1, but on money markets in Europe it took 3,000 D to buy one dollar. By December 1945, inflation had gone so far as to require almost 15,000 D to buy one dollar. A further source of friction in Greece was the fact that the British continued to keep 12,000 ELAS members, captured in the recent fighting, as prisoners in camps in North Africa.<sup>32</sup>

This specter of instability was complicated by a border dispute between Yugoslavia and Greece. In May 1945, the Yugoslav Army posted two divisions to the Greek border and began to evacuate civilians from border areas in preparation for hostilities. The

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<sup>31</sup>Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers, p. 65; U. S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, VIII, 114.

<sup>32</sup>U. S. Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1945, VIII, 221; Weekly Political Intelligence Summary No. 3, September 1944-January 1945, #284, COMNAVEU Files, Operational Archives.



Greek government and British officials feared that an invasion of Greece was imminent. The British commander in Greece requested permission to use British troops to check a Yugoslav invasion, but London rejected the proposal. In July, the Yugoslav border again became an area of contention as the Belgrade government protested that Greek and British forces had violated the border by striking at Yugoslav military installations and inflicting casualties.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the fighting had not completely subsided in Greece and little bands of guerrillas continued to disrupt the peace throughout 1945. In the most significant incident, a force of about 3,000 extreme rightists seized the city Kalamata in the Pelopennesus. A military expedition, which included British and Greek Army units and a Greek destroyer, finally retook Kalamata and dispersed the rightists. Throughout Greece's hardships, the Pelopennesus would prove to be a stronghold of right wing sentiment.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>U. S., Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1945, VIII, 313; Ibid, 325.

<sup>34</sup>Message from Naval Attache', Athens, to the Chief of Naval Operations, 22 January 1946, "Greece" EF31, Operational Archives.

Following the public exchanges between Stalin and Churchill in early 1946, the Soviet ambassador to Greece, Admiral Rodionov, sounded out the Greek premier on 9 March as to the possibility of Greece ceding to the Soviet Union one of the Dodecanese Islands for use as a repair facility for the Soviet merchant marine. Rodionov preferred Salonika, a major port and the second largest city in Greece, but the Russians believed that a presence on one of the Dodecanese would be less visible and more acceptable to Greece. The Greek premier guessed that Rodionov wanted the island as a naval and air base. Furthermore, he questioned Russian motives in naming an admiral as their ambassador to Greece. Rodionov's overture, though he insisted it was his personal view as to how to improve Russian-Greek relations, was obviously made at the behest of his superiors in Moscow. He had served on the Soviet delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference which had drafted the United Nations charter. To assume that a senior naval officer of such prominence would not be acting on the instructions of his government was hardly safe. In reply, the Greek premier insisted that Greek ports and repair facilities were open to the merchant fleets of all nations. He also refused even to

consider the possibility of ceding an island to the Soviet Union, although the Greek claim to the Dodecanese was not finally validated by the UN until July, 1946. In March, at the time of Rodionov's overture, the Soviet Union still claimed the Dodecanese and held up any final award to Greece. Obviously, the Soviet Union wanted bases in the Aegean islands; Rodionov's effort suggested a renewal of the Soviet drive to get those bases in the wake of the exchange of "Cold War" speeches between Churchill and Stalin. Bases in the Eastern Mediterranean had become an important issue with the announced intensification of the East-West struggle.<sup>35</sup>

The Greek elections were also scheduled to be held in March, a month of crisis all over the world. The dispute between EAM and the raw Greek government over the composition of the national army remained volatile. EAM wanted the rebel groups that had stayed in Greece during the war to fight the Germans to be

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<sup>35</sup> Message from Naval Attaché, Athens, to the CNO, 12 March 1946, "Greece" EF31; Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1946, VII, 119.



Union had actually supported Britain's move into Greece in 1944. After March 1946, the Soviet Union initiated an attempt to install a client government in Athens.

After the election, which returned a right wing coalition, fighting between EAM and the government gradually intensified. A plebiscite on the King's return was held in September 1946, and the King entered Athens as Greece's Head of State. General warfare broke out and chaos reigned in the countryside. The nation was economically disabled. The destruction of the war had hit Greece particularly hard. The wartime devastation to her economy was exceeded only by the destruction in Russia, Poland and parts of Germany. Greece's fine merchant marine, which had earned her much needed prewar foreign exchange, had been reduced to a shadow of its former size. To enhance postwar inflation, the Turks reported that the Soviets were sending large sums of gold through Turkey into Greece to disrupt the economy. The civil war retarded agricultural production, which fell as farmers became afraid to tend their fields, vineyards and orchards. By the summer

of 1946, the civil war in Greece, the third in four years, was destroying Greece.<sup>36</sup>

To exacerbate matters for the moderates, more than two sides involved in the fray. The government and EAM/ELAS were the chief protagonists, but a host of smaller bands again took to the field and the government found itself fighting both the leftists and extreme rightists in its attempt to keep order. In the conservative Pelopennesus, rightists simply butchered all leftists, classifying communists and socialists, and even liberals, collectively as fair targets.

The British, with 40,000 troops still stationed in Greece, supported the Greek government to the hilt. Britain's soldiers stayed in enclaves around Athens, Volos and Salonika, but engaged any leftist forces which came near those bases. The British also supplied weapons for the Greek Army of 100,000 men, as well as ships and aircraft for the Navy and Air Force. Even more important, London kept the Athens government

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<sup>36</sup>Intelligence Report from Naval Attaché, Istanbul, 10 November 1945, 16327-A, C-10-n, Old Army and Navy Section, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

afloat with infusions of aid. Indeed, by early 1947, British aid to Greece totaled \$760 million. This was only enough to keep Greece solvent and no funds remained for reconstruction or economic recovery. British aid was necessary, for without it, Greece could only support an army of 50,000 men.<sup>37</sup>

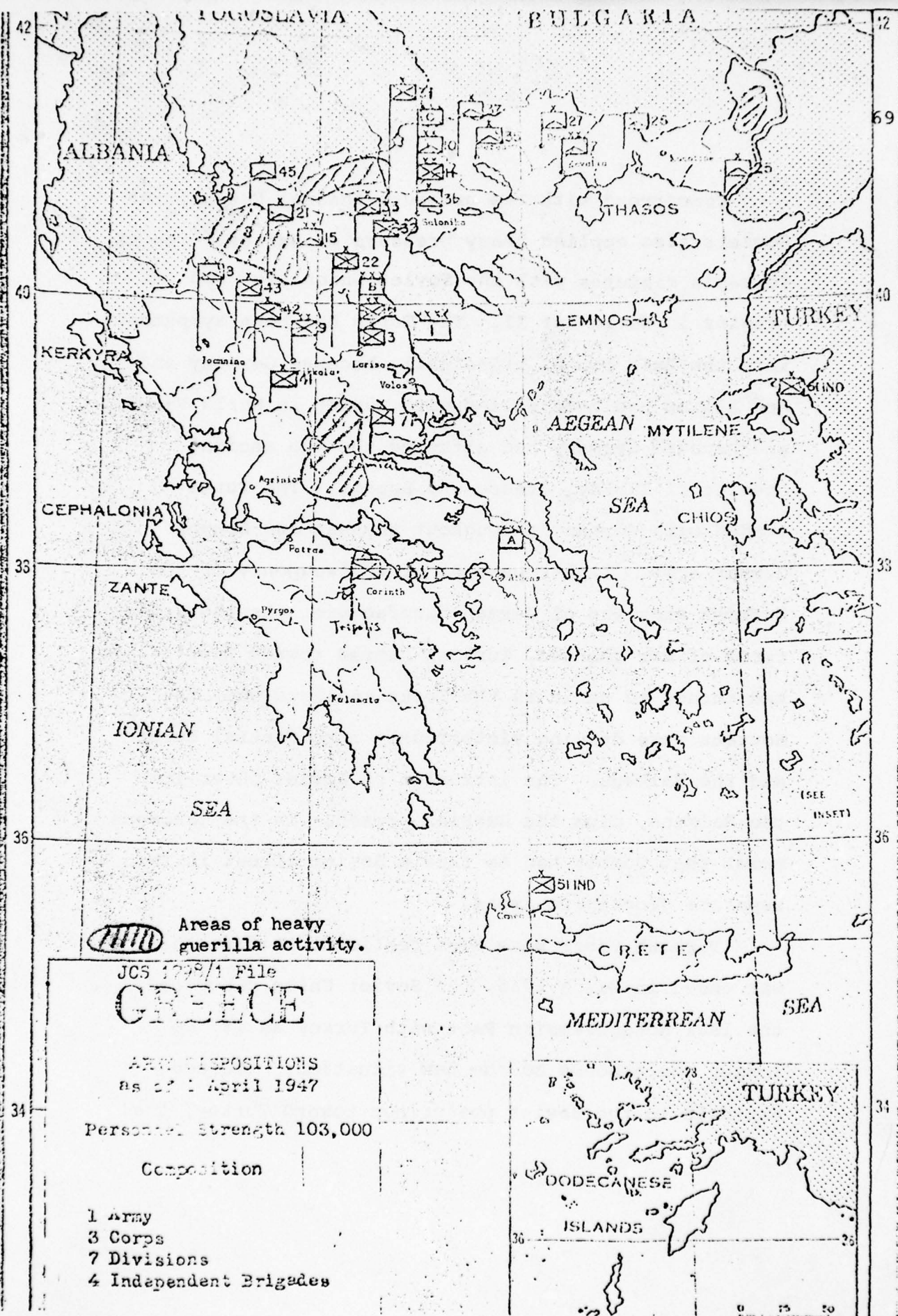
Trouble along Greece's northern frontier presented the gravest danger to the Athens regime. A force of 20,000 leftist rebels operated from sanctuaries and bases in Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The Soviets supplied arms to these rebels in generous quantities. Moreover American naval intelligence reported that the Soviets recruited officers in Odessa and other Russian cities for service as advisors with the Greek rebels. The Soviets pulled no punches in their attempt to topple the Greek government. Though nominally atheistic, the Soviets used the World War II rapprochement with the Orthodox Church to penetrate the Church in the Balkans by manipulating the Patriarch Alexis.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>D. H. Fleming, p. 602; U. S., Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1946, VII, 139.

<sup>38</sup>Message from Assistant Naval Attache, Odessa, 29 August 1947, RG218 Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Leahy File 70, Modern Military Section, National Archives; "ONI Review," July 1946, p. 45, Operational Archives.





Concurrent with the pressure against Greece, the Soviets also applied heavy pressure on Turkey. One of Turkey's disputes with the Soviet Union also had its origins in World War II. The Turks had been sympathetic to the Axis cause, principally because Germany and her allies had been allied with Turkey in World War I, and because Germany had attacked the two ancient enemies of Turkey, Greece and Russia. The Turks traded with Germany throughout the war and bought German arms. Eighty percent of the weaponry of the Turkish army was of German manufacture. As the fortunes of war changed, Turkish hatred toward Russia had turned to panic as the Turks realized that the Soviets were driving victoriously into Central Europe and the Balkans. The intrusion of Soviet power into the Balkans, plus the Russian presence in the Caucasus meant that Turkey had to face a Soviet threat in two separate geographic areas.

Turkish fears were soon realized. Before the war ended in March 1945, the Soviet Union denounced the 1921 Nonaggression Pact with Turkey as it "no longer corresponds to the new situation." To add emphasis to the Soviet posturings toward Turkey, the

Soviet Military Attache spread the untrue rumour that two Bulgarian Army corps were forming on the Turkish border.<sup>39</sup>

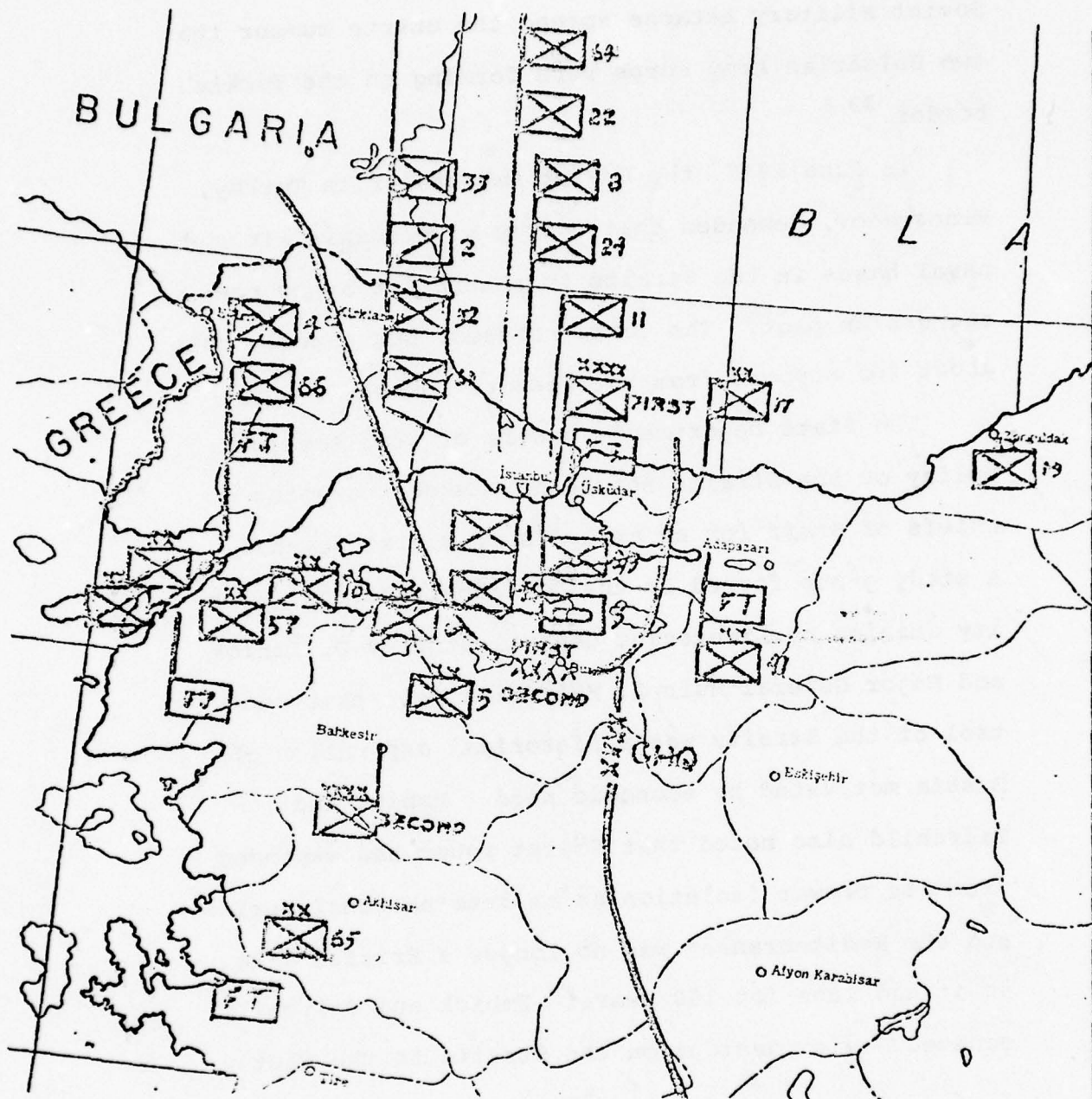
In June 1945, the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Vinogradov, demanded that Turkey give Russia air and naval bases in the Straits in return for a new non-aggression pact. The Turks refused, but eagerly cast about for support from the Western Powers.

The State Department, unsure of what American policy on the Straits should be, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an analysis of Soviet demands. A study group formed by the JCS submitted the majority opinion by Lieutenant General Stanley D. Embick and Major General Muir S. Fairchild felt that control of the Straits was a historical aspiration of Russia motivated by economic need. Embick and Fairchild also noted that Soviet power had expanded from its prewar isolation as an international pariah and the Mediterranean was no longer a British lake as it had been for 150 years. Embick and Fairchild equated Soviet designs on the Straits to the fact

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<sup>39</sup>U. S., Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1945, VIII, p. 1219; Ibid, p. 1225.





" TURKISH ARMY DISPOSITIONS, 25 MARCH 1947"

Leahy MSS, NHD ("Maps" File)

that America was seeking postwar bases in Iceland, in the Azores, and throughout the Pacific. Another member of the study group, Vice Admiral Russell Willson, wrote a minority opinion. Willson advocated strong counters to Soviet moves to take control of the Straits and insisted that conceding the Straits would be a new form of appeasement. The JCS, after reviewing both opinions, forwarded Willson's paper to the State Department. Strong diplomatic notes went out from Washington to Turkey giving her support. Britain, France, and other Western powers followed suit.<sup>40</sup>

In July 1945, the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow, Sarper, in a meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, attempted to placate the Russians by offering Molotov bases in the Straits. Molotov leaped at the offer. However, when Sarper's concession became known, the government in Ankara repudiated his actions. July held other setbacks as well for Turkey. British diplomatic support had helped the Turks to hold off the Soviets in the March crisis. Churchill was defeated in a July election in Britain. He had strongly

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<sup>40</sup>Poole, p. 13.

supported Turkey and his removal stung Ankara. Also in the same month, the Turks received a forecast that a lack of rain during Spring would reduce the annual grain harvest by forty percent of nominal size.<sup>41</sup>

Soviet pressure on Turkey remained throughout late 1945 and 1946. The Red Army massed troops on Turkey's borders in October 1945, March 1946 and again in August 1946. Again diplomatic support from the West as well as U. S. naval demonstrations in the March and August crises bolstered the Ankara regime. The crisis in August was sparked by renewed Soviet demands for bases in the Straits area. This new Russian initiative began when the Soviets accused Turkey of allowing the Axis to violate the Montreux Convention during the Second World War by letting armed German vessels pass through the Straits into the Black Sea where they emerged Soviet naval units. The Soviets demanded a new "Regime of the Straits" to replace the Montreux Convention. The new regime was to include the following terms:

- a. The Straits must always be open for passage of merchant vessels of all countries.
- b. They must likewise be always open for the passage of warships of Black Sea powers.
- c. Passage of warships of non-Black Sea powers through the Straits is to be prohibited with the exception of special cases.

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<sup>41</sup>Weekly Political Intelligence Summary, #304, p. 17.



- d. The establishment of a Straits regime is to be within the competence of Turkey and of the other Black Sea powers.
- e. Turkey and U.S.S.R. will organize joint defense of the Straits.<sup>42</sup>

Joint defense of the Straits was seen as another name for a Russian protectorate over Turkey. The State Department, upon the advice of the JCS, repeatedly issued notes supporting the stand of Turkey. In a "regime" of Black Sea states, Turkey would be dominated and outvoted by the Soviet Union and the Soviet puppet governments in Bulgaria and Rumania. The JCS were strongly against allowing Soviet bases in the Straits, advising that:

We should support the demilitarization of the Straits, and failing that, should oppose any proposals granting a nation other than Turkey, bases or other rights for direct or indirect military control of the Straits.<sup>43</sup>

Also, the Soviet Union demanded the return of the provinces of Kars, Ardahan and Artvin in Eastern Turkey, which the Turks had taken peacefully during the Russian Civil War. To back their demands, the

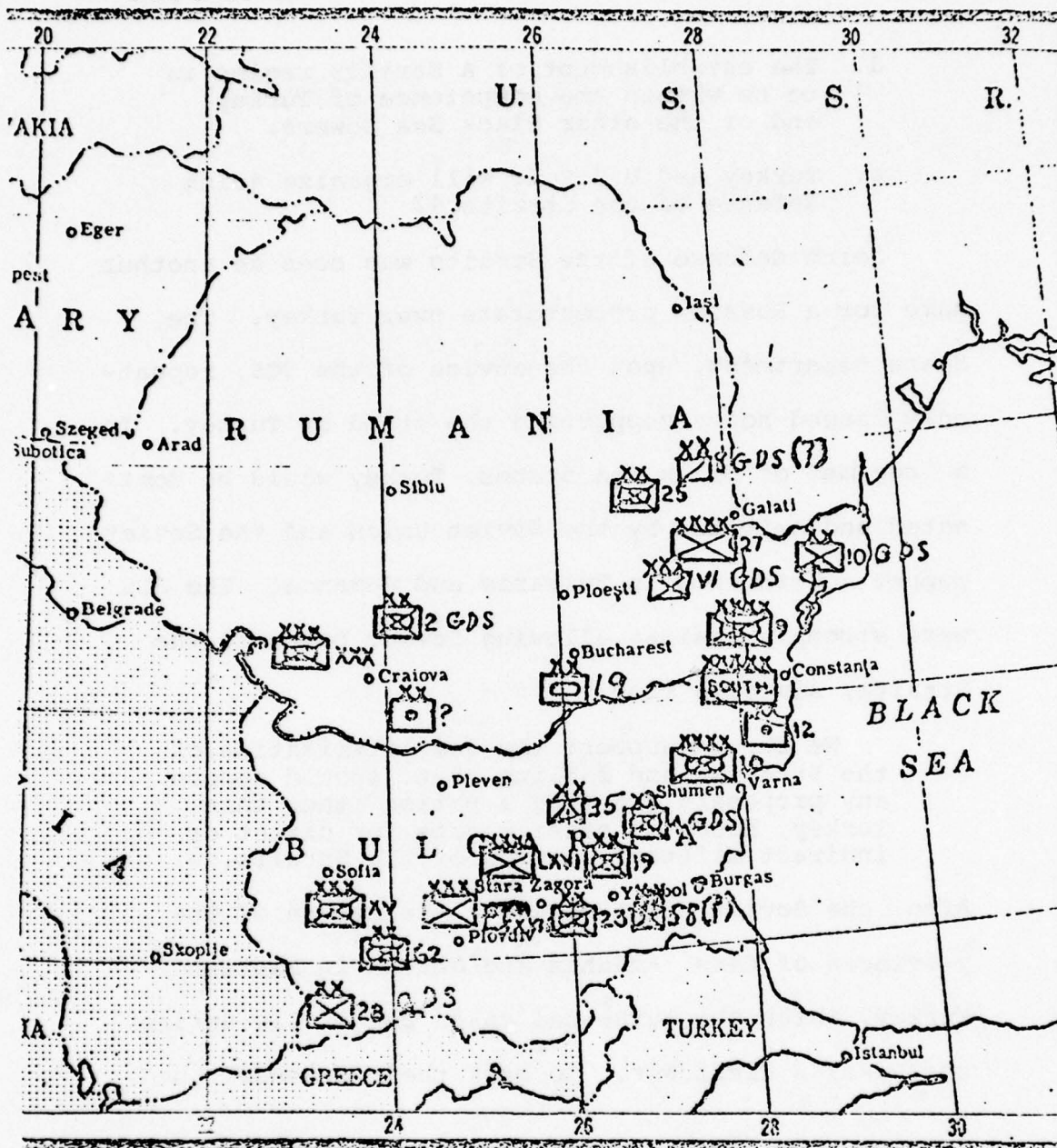
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<sup>42</sup>Memorandum for the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy, "Military Implications of the Current Turkish Situation," 23 August 1946, Joint Chiefs of Staff Correspondence 1946, Leahy Papers, Operational Archives.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

TOP SECRET

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TOP SECRET

"DANUBIAN AREA: SOVIET ARMY UNIT LOCATIONS, 10 SEPTEMBER 1947"

JCS 1798/1 File

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Soviets again massed troops on Turkey's borders. The Red Army added 30,000 men to its forces in Bulgaria, bringing strength there up to 120,000 men, and a similar buildup was observed in the Caucasus.<sup>44</sup>

#### THE COMMITMENT ESCALATES

Throughout 1946 the U. S. Navy continuously operated in the Mediterranean in support of American foreign policy. Using warships to provide shows of force (gunboat diplomacy) had always been practiced by the Great Powers, particularly in the Mediterranean where because of the area's geography many nations in a small area are vulnerable to naval pressure. It has been shown that the U. S. Navy has practiced such applications of pressure in the Mediterranean since the Tripolitan Wars. However, the British Navy was always the predominant force in the area, not the U. S. Navy. In 1946-1947 the U. S. Navy was about to replace that British Navy in dominating the Mediterranean, and at the same time the American government was to become the dominant political force in the region.

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<sup>44</sup>Soviet and Other Order of Battle Changes, 1 October 1946, A8 Intelligence 1945-1946, Box 106, OP-30 Files, Operational Archives.

The opportunity for expanded American naval involvement in the Mediterranean came about in the fateful month of March 1946. The same month which witnessed the Churchill-Stalin exchange, the crisis in Iran, renewed pressure on Turkey, the collapse of the Greek elections leading to new warfare, and an end to Soviet and Western cooperation also saw the first postwar American naval demonstration. The Turkish Ambassador in Washington, Mehmet Munir Ertegun, had died in 1944 and in March 1946, the United States government sent his ashes back to Turkey. The significance of this decision was that the ashes were to be returned to Turkey aboard the "super" battleship Missouri.

The ashes of Lord Lothian, the former British Ambassador to the United States, were returned to Britain in late 1945 on board a Navy cruiser, as protocol demands. Dean Acheson, the Under Secretary of State, in January 1946, wrote to President Truman informing him that Ertegun's body should be returned as well. Acheson mentioned that:

Oral advice from the Navy indicates that a cruiser is available for the voyage to Istanbul and, if you approve, I shall confirm

this with the Navy Department and offer the Turkish Government transportation of the Ambassador's remains accordingly.<sup>45</sup>

Yet two months later a battleship is on its way to Istanbul. Why? Both Forrestal and the Secretary of State, James Byrnes, wanted to send not only the Missouri, but also all of Admiral Marc Mitscher's 8th Fleet, including the two largest carriers in the world, the Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Midway, as well as numerous cruisers and destroyers. Forrestal and Byrnes finally backed away from such a slap at Russia. First, they feared that such a strong move would antagonize the Soviets to a point that would be dangerous. Second, because of demobilization and the meager operating budget it was realized that moving the 8th Fleet into the Mediterranean was impractical and would strip the Atlantic of naval assets. The end result was that the Missouri went alone.<sup>46</sup>

The press, back in the United States and abroad, trumpeted the voyage of the Missouri as a symbol of American support for Greece and Turkey. The same day

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<sup>45</sup>Memorandum for the President from Dean Acheson, Reproduced by Captain Guy Cane, USN, The Buildup of U. S. Naval Force in the Mediterranean as an Instrument of Cold War Policy (Washington: The National War College, 1975), p. 85.

<sup>46</sup>Forrestal, p. 141; Hanson W. Baldwin, New York Times, 18 March 1946, p. 1.



that the Missouri's voyage was announced, the American Government sent a note to the Soviet Government declaring "that it could not remain indifferent to the stay of Soviet troops in Iran beyond the period stipulated in the Anglo-Soviet-Russian treaty of 1942. Walter Lippman, the celebrated columnist, wrote "As everyone knows, the choice of this ship and the timing of its voyage to coincide with the mounting crisis in the Middle East constitutes a political demonstration." After all, concluded Lippman, "when a great power sends a battleship to a disputed area, in the language of diplomacy that means it intends to participate in the settlement." Admiral H. K. Hewitt, Commander Naval Forces Europe, who had embarked on Missouri for her voyage, held a press conference as the ship anchored in Algeciras Bay before heading eastward. At his press conference, Hewitt announced a new program of naval ship visits to European ports "on a scale never known before in this nation's history." However, he denied that the Missouri's voyage was intended to be a symbol of American

support for Turkey in the dispute with the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup>

A number of press articles followed the line set by Walter Lippman, and much was made of the symbolism involved in the choice of the Missouri: traditionally only a cruiser is used to return an Ambassador's remains, the ship was named after President Truman's home state, and the Missouri was was the site of Japan's surrender, ending World War II. In Europe, the U. S. Navy's exploits in the war against Japan were well known, and the Missouri was a symbol of the Navy's spectacular victory. Many of the members of the press who initiated articles on the symbolism of the Missouri would have been embarrassed had they known all of the facts involved in that choice. The Wisconsin, of the Iowa class of super battleships as was the Missouri, was originally chosen to make the voyage. However, the Wisconsin was scheduled to go into the shipyards for an overhaul.

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen G. Xydis, American Naval Visits to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in 1946, Their Impact on American-Soviet Relations, Diss. Columbia University 1956 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), p. 46; Walter Lippman, NYT, 16 March 1946, p. 4.

The Missouri, being the only other battleship remaining on active duty in the Atlantic, was an obvious replacement.<sup>48</sup>

Buy why was a battleship sent rather than a cruiser? Officially, the reason given at the time was that no cruisers were available for the mission. Admiral Chester Nimitz, the CNO, even wired Admiral Hewitt and James in Europe claiming that a "cruiser shortage" was the cause of the battleship being sent. Since Acheson was told that a cruiser would be available, such an excuse lacks substance. Or is it to be assumed that the Navy is so unorganized that it would fail to have a single cruiser when it had promised one, and would just happen to have one of its three active battleships available at that time? Further, if this was the case, why not wait to return the Ambassador's remains until a cruiser was available? He had been dead for two years, yet his remains had to be send back on whatever ship was available at that particular time? March 1946 just happened to be a

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<sup>48</sup> "Letters and Dispatches Relating to Mediterranean Voyage by Missouri," EF75, Operational Archives.



most critical time in superpower relations, in Turkey and Iran, and in Greece, where the Missouri was scheduled for a visit after depositing Ertegun's remains at Istanbul, a visit scheduled to take place only days after the Greek elections. In fact, spokesmen for the Navy, as well as Admiral Nimitz, were telling less than the truth. Checking the logs of Atlantic coast cruisers will show that two ships, Houston and Portsmouth, were easily available for a cruise to the Mediterranean.<sup>49</sup>

The Missouri arrived in Istanbul on 5 April escorted by the cruiser Providence and destroyer Power, which joined the battleship as she entered the Mediterranean, and three Turkish destroyers. Huge crowds manned Istanbul's Byzantine wall to see the coming of the mighty ship. "Welcome Missouri" was put up in electric lights on a lighthouse. The Naval Attache's report noted that "People came from eastern provinces to see ships and peasants reported travelling

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<sup>49</sup>Chief of Naval Operations' Ships' Card Files, Operational Archives.

fifty miles to see Admiral Hewitt at stations during trip to Ankara."<sup>50</sup>

To commemorate the visit of the Missouri the Turkish Government issued special "Missouri" stamps and cigarettes. Even one year after the visit, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral Ingliss, while touring Europe was bombarded by questions from the common people in Turkey about the Missouri and its impressive visit.<sup>51</sup>

The Missouri's visit to Athens was even more festive than that to Istanbul. This time the battleship was escorted by the two other American ships, a Turkish destroyer and two Greek destroyers. Hewitt was warmly received by the Greeks. He had visited Athens, and Turkey, once before, as a Passed Midshipman (a Midshipman who had graduated from Annapolis and was waiting for an opening on the Ensigns' list) on the old battleship Missouri during the cruise

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<sup>50</sup>"Letters and Dispatches Relating to Mediterranean Voyage by Missouri."

<sup>51</sup>"Text of Remarks Made by RADM Ingliss, USN, Before General Planning Group 1 August 1946," A-8 Intelligence 1946, Box 106, OP-30 Files, Operational Archives.

of the Great White Fleet around the world in 1908. The old Missouri had been Hewitt's first ship, and now he had returned to Athens on a ship of the same name 38 years later as a four star admiral. Hewitt was presented with a Byzantine sword dated 1035 A.D. by officers of the Royal Hellenic Navy. President Truman was declared an honorary Athenian and Hewitt was given a Greek urn from the fifth century B.C. filled with earth brought from the Acropolis to be placed at Franklin D. Roosevelt's grave.<sup>52</sup>

Though the fact that Admiral Rodionov had only recently asked for a base in the Aegean must have been on the minds of the Greek politicians, none mentioned that fact in their speeches, or contradicted Hewitt's claim that there was nothing politically directed against the Soviets in the visit. But the press did not feel so restrained. While the leftists papers ignored the Missouri, the ultra-royalist paper

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<sup>52</sup>Xydis, American Naval Visits, pp. 72-112; Admiral H. K. Hewitt Oral History Transcript. Special Collections Section, U. S. Naval Academy Library.



Akropolis typified rightist sentiment with a front page editorial on 9 April.

... we recognize very clearly the meaning of this majestic funeral procession. Russia stands at the land gates of Turkey, threatening. America does likewise at the sea gates of Turkey in a friendly way and visits it: "Don't be scared, I am here." ...

Touch wood, our Ambassador in Washington had not died, like his Turkish colleague. Thus the arrival of the American colossus at Piraeus does not have the same transparent justification as its trip to Istanbul. However, the motive and purpose of its visit are the same: Around us here, and in the Balkans hovers the great Russian shadow. So the American comes here, too, to tell us: "Hold tight, and you may be sure we are with you."<sup>53</sup>

However, leftist sentiment in regards to the Missouri differed from that of the rightist. Eleftheri Ellada, the official EAM paper completely ignored the Missouri. Rizospastis, the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) paper had an extremely interesting article on page 2 of its 11 April edition.

With sincere joy we greet the men and officers of the great American Republic, which was our ally in our great anti-fascist struggle against Hitler and Mussolini. But we are unable to conceal from these friends of ours, the American sailors and officers, the most deep-felt uneasiness of the Greek people at

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<sup>53</sup>Quoted By Xydis, American Naval Visits, p. 92.

so many bad symptoms which the foreign policy of President Truman and Mr. Byrnes recently shows . . . its increasingly manifest submission to unconcealed imperialistic interests, certainly contribute in no way to the rise of American prestige during the troubled postwar period we are passing through.<sup>54</sup>

One curious article deserves mention as well. To Vema in a front page editorial on 12 April noted that a British cruiser, H.M.S. Sirius, had arrived the same day as the Missouri and had Vice Admiral Turner aboard. To Vema took pains to stress that British support was as important as American help and that the people of Greece should not allow the Missouri to obscure their recognition of the Sirius and the important British support that Sirius symbolized.<sup>55</sup>

The most startling reaction pertaining to the Missouri voyage was the Soviet Union's; it had none. In spite of the fact that the Missouri was engaged in blatant gunboat diplomacy directed at supporting Greece and Turkey against Russia, the Soviet press made no mention at all of the Missouri for three weeks after its voyage. Finally, when the Soviet

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<sup>54</sup>Quoted by Xydis, American Naval Visits, p. 95.

<sup>55</sup>Xydis, American Naval Visits, p. 97.

Union did refer to the Missouri, it was to chastise the Turkish press for reading too much into the meaning of the voyage. The Kremlin had chosen to accept the official American line that the Missouri was returning the Ambassador's ashes and nothing more. Reference was even made to the fact that the American Government had failed to send a strong task force with the Missouri as some American officials desired (Forrestal and Byrnes). But, though silent in their outward response, the Soviets allowed the crisis to die and pulled their troops back from the border.<sup>56</sup>

Following the Missouri voyage, American naval operations in the Mediterranean reverted to their previous low level of activity. The recent demobilization had engaged most of the energies of officers at all levels in the Mediterranean and no efforts had been made to establish a consistent naval policy, as James' reversal of Glassford by returning to Naples had shown. RADM Bernard Bieri, who took command of TF125 in June 1946, was given no orders except a vague directive to support U. S. occupation forces in Europe, but was given no details or specifics of how

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-112.



this should be accomplished. Bieri time and again asked the State Department for directions on establishing a port visit schedule which would support American foreign policy. He constantly received an answer that directions would be forthcoming as soon as policy evaluations were completed. But, because of the changing situation in the postwar world, the evaluations would not be completed before the crisis erupted later in 1946, and Bieri never received anything more than a copy of the orders given to U. S. commanders who sailed the Mediterranean in the early 1800's.<sup>57</sup>

Not receiving any direction from the State Department, Bieri began to set his own naval policy. He would prepare a program of port visits around the Mediterranean, and unless the State Department vetoed any proposed visits he would carry out his program. From time to time the State Department would request that a particular port be visited, but only in rare isolated cases. Bieri attempted to concentrate his operations in July around Trieste in the Adriatic

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<sup>57</sup>VADM Bernard Bieri Oral History Transcript.

because of the tensions around that city. In the summer of 1946 Tito chose to renew his claims to Trieste. In June and July he pressed those claims and moved large ground forces to the outskirts of the city. Allied troops, including a U. S. Army division, were engaged in a nonviolent standoff with the Yugoslavian forces. Bieri felt that some visible naval support would stiffen resistance to Tito's moves to gain control of Trieste and arrived off Trieste with his flagship, the cruiser Fargo and two of his destroyers. The American press, not realizing that Bieri had been quietly reinforced in June to a total strength of four cruisers and seven destroyers, assumed that Bieri had his entire task force at Trieste and assigned his presence there ominous meanings.<sup>58</sup>

Bieri's task force virtually ignored Greece after the Missouri visit, even though the country went from crisis to crisis. Problems in Greece were principally a British matter. The British had 60,000 men in three divisions in Greece, including the 4th Indian

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<sup>58</sup>Xydis, American Naval Visits, pp. 113-115.

Division and some crack parachute regiments shoring up the Greek government's position. Financial assistance of \$760 million from Britain over 1945 and 1946 also helped keep Greece afloat, there was no need for American involvement. Turkey, though in the forefront of American diplomatic efforts, also was outside of Bierli's realm of concern. However, it was events concerning these two nations which were soon to heavily affect American naval forces in the Mediterranean. Senior American naval officers and military strategists would soon have their attention returned to the Eastern Mediterranean.

Tensions had eased for only a brief while, for in August the Soviets re-issued their demands on Turkey for multi-lateral control of the Straits. Admiral Leahy again referred the issue to the Joint Staff for evaluation. A JCS Study Group report was passed to Navy Secretary Forrestal and Army Secretary Robert Patterson on 23 August. In this report, the planners warned that "Soviet participation in defense of the Turkish Straits would project Soviet military power into an area vital to the Turks." In a PINCHER War, they warned, the Soviets would enjoy "a tremendous capability to reinforce in days or hours a bridgehead



within the country" even though prewar "Soviet military privileges and forces within Turkey were nominal." Thus, a Soviet presence in Turkey perforce would result in "immediate military dominance." American strategists realized that this situation . . . would be obvious to all Turks" and the Staff concluded it would "so soften the Turkish attitude toward Russia as to soon result in reducing Turkey to a satellite Soviet state." In accord with the scenario for PINCHER, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterated their position that Turkey was "the most important military factor in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East." In addition, United States intelligence that the Turks possessed "a firm resolution to oppose the apparent Soviet policy of expansion in the area." While Turkish will, if supported, was never questioned, the Joint Staff did note the major deficiencies in Turkey's posture: the lack of an air force and navy and the low grade of the equipment used by the large army. However, the strategists added that, "If properly equipped and supported" by exogenous forces, the Turkish Army "is capable of offering material resistance, even to the Soviets."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> A16-3(5) War Plans 1946, pp. 1-2.

The Joint Chiefs also asserted that if Russia were to gain control of Turkey "by political concessions," Soviet power would have been projected into the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean and the threat was so great that the area would have been untenable for the Allied Powers. Furthermore, the political repercussions would have been considerable as the nations in the area would undoubtedly have lost their faith in the ability of the Western Powers to defend them from Soviet expansion. Even more ominous, warned the Joint Chiefs, was the fact that because of the nature of warfare at the time, particularly the importance of aircraft, possession of the Straits was meaningless to the Soviets unless they also dominated the area for several hundred miles from the Straits. This meant that possession of the Aegean Islands, and Crete in particular, was essential to the use of the Straits. Thus, "the same logic which would justify Soviet participation in the defense of the Dardanelles would also tend to justify further Soviet military penetration through the Aegean."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Memorandum for Forrestal and Patterson, p. 1.

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At a meeting with the President; Forrestal; Leahy; and Under Secretary of War, Royall; the Under Secretary of State, Dean Acheson; and the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised Truman to send a powerful naval squadron, to include the carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt, to visit ports in the Eastern Mediterranean, both to support Turkey in her determination to refuse Russia's demands, and in order to be on hand in that strategic area in case events did take a turn for the worse.<sup>61</sup> When General Eisenhower, the Army's Chief of Staff, questioned if the President realized all the ramifications of the decision and understood that war could easily result, Truman pulled a map of the Middle East out of his desk and proceeded to give a lecture on the "strategic importance of the area and the extent to which we must be prepared to keep it free from Soviet domination." Eisenhower must have been suitably impressed. Upon Truman's orders, Fleet Admiral Nimitz, the Chief of Naval Operations, ordered all of the

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<sup>61</sup>Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 195.

12th Fleet destroyers in Europe to enter the Mediterranean that same day and began to plan for the Roosevelt's voyage. Truman, explaining his orders, claimed "we might as well find out whether the Russians were bent on world conquest now as in five or ten years."<sup>62</sup>

The Roosevelt's voyage was intended to intimidate the Russians though, to reduce the effect slightly, the ship's voyage was announced by the Navy in Naples rather than issuing an announcement from Washington. The primary mission of the Roosevelt was to act as a counter to the large Soviet troop concentrations which the Russians had once again deployed on Turkey's borders. The Navy was being used as a substitute for the Army because the United States had no large troop formations to concentrate anywhere to oppose the Soviet moves. However, the U. S. Navy was chosen as a more effective device for muscle flexing because naval units can sail around the Mediterranean visiting ports or lurk off-shore where the governments and the press of all the countries in the area can note its presence. The sending of the Roosevelt did give muscle to American

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<sup>62</sup>Forrestal, p. 192.

diplomatic actions, Roosevelt's air wing by itself was larger than almost all of the air forces of the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The arrival of the Roosevelt in Athens shortly after the plebiscite on King George's return, as the Missouri had visited Athens only days after the elections in March, was the final proof that America had again called out the gunboats.

American actions in a minor way did attempt to take some of the edge off the Roosevelt's voyage in order to avoid provoking an open break between Russia and the United States. Acheson, who had been present at the meeting when Truman had ordered the Roosevelt sent, denied to the press that the cruise was meant as a symbol of anything but friendship and goodwill for nations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Navy backed away from an announced air show at Athens, to the disappointment of the waiting crowds, because it was felt that the air show, to take place as the Roosevelt entered the channel at Piraeus and anchored, would be just too overpowering and blatant a sign of force. Still, there was no doubt in either Moscow or Washington why the Roosevelt was sent.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> NYT, 28 August 1946, p. 2.



The Roosevelt's reception in Athens was not nearly as festive as that given to the Missouri five months earlier. In addition to the frustration of not seeing the expected air show, which was cancelled at the last minute, the Greeks had endured five months of a new civil war and the economy was in worse shape than ever. Greece was spiritually exhausted, and little was being done to aid her by outside powers except Britain. Once again the American Government officially denied that it supported the Greek regime against the communists. The Greek press stressed again the symbolism of the ship's name. Franklin D. Roosevelt's popularity was extremely high in Greece, as the gift to Admiral Hewitt earlier of the urn of earth from the Acropolis to be placed on Roosevelt's grave had shown.<sup>64</sup> Again the press evidenced the deep rift between left and right. Estia, a strongly

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<sup>64</sup>Xydis, American Naval Visits, pp. 180-194.

pro-Western paper, on 5 September 1946 wrote on its second page that:

The Greek people welcome with the sincerest emotion and deepest respect the proud ships of the American Navy as representatives of a nation which, though economically and militarily the mightiest power on earth, though it had at its disposal means *which would allow it to impose all its wishes*, nonetheless managed to remain faithful to liberal and peaceful ideals. [Italics added.]<sup>65</sup>

Rizospastis, the EAM organ, actually called upon President Truman to forbid the Navy to send ships into Greek waters because it would show support for the Greek Government and the King.

While the Roosevelt was visiting Greece the British once again also reminded the Greeks of their continued support as well, as they had with the Sirius during the Missouri visit. This time, while the FDR was in Piraeus, two British cruisers, Ajax and Liverpool, and twelve destroyers were operating in the Aegean away from their base at Malta. Though the new American forces in the Mediterranean were gaining much attention internationally, British naval forces would maintain their numerical superiority in the region for

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<sup>65</sup>Quoted by Xydis, American Naval Visits, p. 185.

quite some time. The American naval forces were a novelty and a reversal of past policy, while the large British naval presence in the Mediterranean had existed for 150 years.

With the Roosevelt's arrival in the Mediterranean newspapers all over the world were unanimous in explaining the voyage. World Report claimed that this was a strong show of force intended to stop the Russians from their expansionist drive.

United States Navy power, now in the Mediterranean, is on display to re-enforce United States State Department notes on the issue of waterways, particularly the Dardanelles. The aircraft carrier U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt is showing the flag east of Gibraltar, while in London Admiral Marc Mitscher, commander of the Eighth Fleet, says the United States will maintain an enlarged fleet in the Mediterranean for some time to come.<sup>66</sup>

The Soviet Union attacked the vessel's presence in the Mediterranean as soon as the cruise was announced, both by radio and in print, contrary to the action taken with the Missouri. Even more damaging to world opinion for the United States was the Soviets' ability to pull quotes from American articles such as that in

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<sup>66</sup><sub>1</sub>, (12 September 1946), pp. 5-6, Quoted by Xydis, American Naval Visits, p. 133.



World Report or the Christian Science Monitor. Moscow Radio called the "demonstration of force" a case of "plain intimidation," and directed its broadcasts at Britain in the hope that jealousy at being displaced in the Mediterranean might lead to a breakup of the close Anglo-American alliance.<sup>67</sup>

The U. S. Navy was now committed to a continued naval presence in the Mediterranean in advance support of an evolving American foreign policy. of course, because of the American strategic planning, Navy commanders were anxious to strengthen the Mediterranean squadron. As well as increasing the number of cruisers and destroyers in the Mediterranean, CNO established a policy of rotating a carrier into the Mediterranean on a regular basis. The Roosevelt only remained in the area during the month of August. Following the return of the Roosevelt, the carrier Randolph entered the Mediterranean in September and remained through January 1947. The glow of American support had still not worn off and people came from miles around when the Randolph visited ports in Turkey to see the new American ship. In February 1947, the Leyte replaced the Randolph and and was in the Mediterranean when a new crisis erupted.

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<sup>67</sup>Xydis, American Naval Visits, PR140-150.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

After the August 1946 incident, the United States Government had joined Britain in support of Turkey against Soviet moves to a degree to which had not been anticipated. Washington considered the maintenance of anti-communist governments in Greece, Turkey, and Iran essential to the defense of the British Empire against the Soviet Union, and to the defense of the United States, since Britain figured so importantly in American war plans. America's effort throughout 1946 was confined to diplomacy and the dispatch of naval forces to the Mediterranean, and after August the U. S. Navy maintained a carrier and a number of cruisers and destroyers in the Mediterranean on a rotation basis. However, the union of British and American efforts in this region was about to undergo a radical change. Britain was about to collapse as a Great Power.

World War II left Britain morally, industrially and financially exhausted. The effects of five and a half years of bearing the brunt of fighting Nazi Germany in the largest war in history had left the British tired and unwilling to endure further strenuous effort; they hoped for a return to normalcy. British industrial plant had been damaged by the Luftwaffe and German V-1

and V-2 rockets. While in better economic shape than most of Europe, the wartime degradation of British home industry had been significant. The war had also left distribution systems and communications in shambles, both within the Empire and to overseas trading partners. Shipping lines returned to foreign ports waiting for them to be cleared and reorganized to accept once again British trade. Agents of industrial firms attempted to find buyers for British goods in a war devastated world, or sellers to provide goods and raw materials for the British market. Worse was Britain's financial exhaustion. Foreign exchange credits were non-existent. Investments in foreign nations had been liquidated to pay for war imports. Lack of British buying power had forced the United States to resort to lend lease so that Britain could continue to arm herself early in the war. After the war, this lack of foreign exchange devastated British economic recovery.

The British economy began to revive in 1946 but a series of blizzards in January of 1947 disrupted all hopes for a smooth transition. The storms disrupted



production and exports, the final loss in export earnings totalled \$800 million.<sup>68</sup> India, Egypt and Burma had gained their independence from the Empire in 1946. The economic collapse of February 1947 left Britain a shadow of its former self. Immediate reductions in expenses were ordered to soften the effects of the losses from the storm, but with India and the others already gone, there were few places to cut back. Aid to Greece and Turkey were two of several economies. Britain still maintained 40,000 soldiers near Athens, as well as giving extensive military and economic aid to Greece, which had already totaled \$760 million since the liberation in 1944. Turkey had also received aid, and in fact had just been provided a number of aircraft to modernize the Turkish Air Force. Removal of the aid would risk both nations falling into the Soviet orbit, but Britain was in no position to maintain the aid.

On February 21, 1947, the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Inverchapel, delivered a note from

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<sup>68</sup> Joseph M. Jones, The Fifteen Weeks (February 21-June 5, 1947) (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 80.

London which informed the United States government of the decision to cut aid to Greece and Turkey. London realized the seriousness of the Soviet pressure on those nations, but the economic situation in Britain precluded any other alternative. The United States could either take Britain's place and pick up the burden of the aid, or Greece and Turkey would be forced to fend for themselves, presumably falling to the Soviets in time. The crisis was recognized for what it was, an abdication of Great Power status by Great Britain. The United States was being handed the leadership of the Western world, yet to take Britain's place in Greece and Turkey would be a complete reversal of previous American policy. Never before during peacetime had the United States been heavily involved in such European affairs. Yet, this was not quite peacetime, for the crisis in Greece and Turkey signalled the onset of the Cold War.

George Kennan, the author of the "long" telegram from Moscow a year earlier which so heavily influenced estimates of Soviet behavior by State Department, was appointed to chair a special study group to formulate

options for President Truman.<sup>69</sup> Other studies were undertaken by military and naval study groups. The Office of Naval Intelligence summed up the situation for the Navy in February 1947. ONI asserted that if Greece and Turkey were not supported and fell a domino effect would result. "Whatever the outcome, if Russia gets control of the Dardanelles and Britain loses part or all of her control in Greece, the trouble spot will not be erased but will move westward." The report further stated that the countries on the Mediterranean "are thus pawns in the game. Sometimes, however, their moves are of importance." The report went on to describe the "precarious" position of Italy, and even that of Spain and Portugal. This was an area of British interests, yet Britain could not hold the situation in check herself. "In the final analysis, of course, she must count on the backing of the United States."<sup>70</sup>

Within the Truman Administration, none expressed doubts about the policy the United States should adopt.

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<sup>69</sup>Truman, p. 101.

<sup>70</sup>ONI Review, February 1947, Operational Archives.



Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, who had replaced Byrnes, was preparing for the Council of Foreign Ministers to be held in Moscow. Nevertheless, he participated in the decision to extend aid to Greece and Turkey, leaving orders with Acheson for the State Department to draw up a program for the extension of that aid and to draft a speech for President Truman. Officials in the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs "were quite openly elated over the possibility that the United States might now take action on a broad enough scale to prevent the Soviet Union from breaking through the Greece-Turkey-Iran barrier into the Middle East." When the final program emerged from the State Department, recommending an extensive program of technical and military assistance, which would require advisors, as well as monetary aid, none of the members of Truman's cabinet voiced any opposition. A meeting with a number of Congressional leaders on February 27 was scheduled to begin the process of getting the authorizing legislation through Congress. Acheson gave an impassioned presentation on Soviet objectives throughout the world. He lingered upon the situation in Greece and Turkey, and remarked upon the possibility that their fall could cause a lack of confidence in the

Middle East which could lead to the loss of the Middle East nations, and eventually Italy and France, the first expression of the "domino theory." Finally the Soviets would begin penetrating South Asia and Africa. He painted the Soviet Union as an oppressive dictatorship of the darkest type and ended by claiming that only the United States could save the world.<sup>71</sup>

Military analysis of the crisis was unequivocal. If Turkey fell to the Soviets, American security would be jeopardized. Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman had just presented PINCHER to the President in January, and the strategic importance of the Middle East must have weighed heavily on the Chief Executive's mind. By dominating Turkey, the Soviets would be more than half-way to the oil of the Mideast. In this context, Greece was important only in that her fall would leave Turkey outflanked. The Joint Chiefs notified Patterson and Forrestal that "it is believed that the Soviet Union currently possesses neither the desire nor the resources to conduct a major war." They felt that the Soviets were bluffing and would not "attempt in the near future the direct military measures which would be required in

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<sup>71</sup>Jones, pp. 133-141.

order to impose her will on a Turkish nation whose political and psychological temper remains sufficiently strong to resist successfully Soviet aggressive measures short of war." The Joint Chiefs felt that the dangerous aspect of the situation was the possibility "that Turkey, unless given positive assurances including concrete assistance" would lose her determination and yield to "Soviet pressure short of direct military measures. The probability of such an adverse occurrence will be materially increased in the event that aid to Greece is denied or, if undertaken, fails of its purpose." The Joint Chiefs also repeated the ONI assertion that a domino effect throughout the Middle East and Western Europe would result if Russia were able to dominate Turkey in peacetime. "If Russia can absorb Turkey in peace our ability to defend the Middle East in war will be virtually destroyed."<sup>72</sup>

The British had planned to spend \$250 million on aid to Greece alone in 1947. As it evolved in Washington, the American program proposed \$250 million for

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<sup>72</sup>Memorandum to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, 13 March 1947, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records 1704, Operational Archives.



Greece and \$150 million for Turkey. The fall of Greece was considered imminent and she therefore was to receive priority on aid.<sup>73</sup> On March 12 Truman presented his plan to Congress. A key feature of his "Truman Doctrine" speech was that the President consistently emphasized the danger to Greece, while only mentioning Turkey briefly, although every analysis emphasized the strategic importance of Turkey as opposed to Greece. The President clearly resorted to this tactic to obtain Congressional approval for the program. Greece was the cradle of Western Civilization and there was a substantial bloc of Greek-American voters; on the other hand, Turkey was an alien, oriental state which had been an enemy in the First World War. In the President's presentation, he offered American help to any nation faced with domestic or foreign communist pressure. Truman asserted America's leadership of the free world by announcing that the United States would police the world against Soviet aggression and subversion.

The U. S. Navy became a primary instrument in implementing this daring, new policy. The day after Truman announced his new policy to Congress and the

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<sup>73</sup>Acheson, p. 221.

world, he ordered Forrestal to send the carrier Leyte, then cruising the Mediterranean after having replaced Randolph, and nine other ships to visit Greek ports as another gesture of support to that beleaguered nation.<sup>74</sup> The American Naval Attaché in Athens, a Commander, was relieved by a Rear Admiral.<sup>75</sup> The Naval Attaches in both Greece and Turkey received a new directive to cooperate on naval affairs with new Military Assistance Groups which would oversee the extension of military aid to those two nations. While the U. S. Navy arranged for aid to the Greek and Turkish Navies, the U. S. Army began to reorganize and equip the armies of both nations, and the British were persuaded to maintain both air forces. The priorities for aiding the Turkish armed forces had been outlined in the March JCS analysis:

a. Primarily, to stiffen the Turkish will and ability to resist to the end that the Turks continue a firm national posture against Soviet pressure.

b. Secondly, to improve the Turkish military potential so that in the unlikely event of war, either in the form of an attack on Turkey by the Soviets or development of hostilities in other areas, the Turks will resist with force any Soviet aggression and

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<sup>74</sup>Truman, p. 107.

<sup>75</sup>Message from CNO to Naval Attaché, Athens, 15 March 1947, "Greece" EF31.

will have the maximum possible military capability to undertake a holding and delaying action in their own country.<sup>76</sup>

The emphasis for both nations was to upgrade their ground forces. In the case of Greece it was accepted that the Red Army could overrun the nation in a conventional assault. Therefore, Greece was only to be armed to prevent a rebel takeover, and thus prevent the Soviets from starting out a future war with an advanced position in Greece. On the other hand, American aid to Turkey was expected to shore up the army so that it could defend most of Turkey in a PINCHER war until help could arrive. A later document, an analysis by the State-War-Navy-Coordination Committee (SWNCC) after the Greek crisis had passed, discussed fully the contrast between American strategy in Greece and Turkey. The SWNCC report agreed with the JCS that "the security of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East is of critical importance to the future security of the United States." It was important that neither Greece nor Turkey fall under Soviet domination because "both

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<sup>76</sup>Memorandum to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, 13 March 1947, JCS 1704.



countries offer bases from which the USSR could launch operations against the islands of Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus and against communications in the Eastern Mediterranean and to the Middle East." SWNCC joined the JCS in arguing that "Turkey is strategically more important than Greece since in addition it dominates major air, land and sea routes from the USSR to the Cairo-Suez area and to the Middle East oil fields."<sup>77</sup> Upon the foregoing considerations, SWNCC argued that long range strategic interests compelled the United States to set the following goals for its military aid program:

a. Greece: A Greek military establishment capable of maintaining internal security in order to avoid the communist domination of Greece.

b. Turkey: A Turkish military establishment of sufficient size and effectiveness to insure Turkey's continued resistance to Soviet pressure; the develop of combat effectiveness to the extent that any overt Soviet aggression can be delayed long enough to permit the commitment of U. S. and allied forces in Turkey in order to deny certain portions of Turkey to the USSR.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>SWNCC, 18 January 1949, Operational Archives.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

In early 1947, American naval units in the Mediterranean were still organized as TF125, (also U. S. Naval Forces, Mediterranean) under Admiral Bieri. CNO tasked Bieri with using his assets to support American policy to defend Greece and Turkey. Thereafter, the Navy would operate to protect the Eastern Mediterranean, an area which would see the major U. S. naval effort in a PINCHER war. In sum, the Navy was being allowed to pre-position forces to protect its ability to complete its wartime mission.

Nimitz and Forrestal finally issued to Bieri specific directives on his presence in the Mediterranean. Following the Leyte visit in March, an extensive program of ship visits was arranged for the rest of 1947. Usually, the ships of TF125 visited Greek ports because Greece, with a long coastline, was geographically more receptive to naval demonstrations than Turkey. However, Turkish ports were also visited from time to time.

On April 12, 1947, the Greek Prime Minister spoke to the American Ambassador in Athens and urgently requested more ship visits to Greek ports by U. S. naval vessels. The Naval Attaché immediately notified the CNO of the conversations and the Prime Minister's request was granted. In mid-April the carrier Leyte,

the light cruisers Daytona, Providence and Portsmouth, five destroyers and two auxiliaries gathered at Suda Bay in Crete. From there in early May, the Daytona and Leyte went to Istanbul and the Providence departed for Athens. Another cruiser, the Manchester, visited Salonika the first week of May and a destroyer sailed to Rhodes. Continued British support also became evident in April as the Royal Air Force began to supply Greece with an additional 245 aircraft, including 90 Spitfire fighters and a number of Mosquito bombers. This more than doubled the size of the Royal Hellenic Air Force. In February, only two months earlier, the RHAF had a fighting strength of only 40 Spitfires and seven old Wellington bombers. Salonika was an important and often visited port throughout the crisis because it is in northern Greece near the fighting and rebel bases and sources of the rebel's supply in the nearby communist countries. Also the nearness of Salonika to Turkey in Europe gave the Turks comfort in the face of the Soviet troops in Bulgaria. Confirmation that the Soviets took note of the American signals of support to Greece and Turkey, as evidenced by American naval visits, came from the Naval Attache in Moscow, who reported to Nimitz that while the Soviet press had practically



ignored Western efforts in the Second World War, current U. S. naval movements in the Mediterranean were being reported in detail.<sup>79</sup> An even more illustrative example of the psychological effect of American naval visits was highlighted in May when Nimitz warned Bierl that intelligence sources reported "that at a general meeting of the Central Committee of EAM, a decision was made to push hostilities on Crete and sabotage attempts against American naval vessels in Greek waters."<sup>80</sup>

The port visiting program received another boost during the summer of 1947. On July 16, Marshall sent a memorandum to the President explaining that the situation in Greece had worsened. Rebel units had crossed the frontiers of Greece to prepare for a push to wrest control of portions of Greece from the Athens

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<sup>79</sup>Message from Naval Attaché, Athens, to CNO and COMNAVME, 12 April 1947, "Greece" EF31; Quarterly Summary of U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, 1 April 1947-1 July 1947, Serial 0142, p. 5-6; Message from Naval Attaché, London to CNO, 10 April 1947, "Greece" EF31; Miscellaneous Memos 1947, Records of the Military-Politico Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Operational Archives. Message from Naval Attaché, Moscow, to CNO, 25 August 1947, RG218 Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Leahy File 70, Modern Military Section.

<sup>80</sup>Message from CNO to COMNAVME, 14 May 1947, "Greece" EF31.

government and to set up independent People's Republics. The rebels had apparently changed tactics, limiting their objectives to gaining control of northern Greece. To check this move, Truman ordered the Navy to send a large part of the naval force then in the Mediterranean to visit Greek ports. Navy Secretary Forrestal agreed, reaffirming his belief that the visits would have a deterrent effect on Communist guerrilla activities, and a new round of visits began. However, this proved insufficient and the guerrilla leader, Marcos Vafiades, proclaimed the Free State of North Greece on August 9.<sup>81</sup> The Greek Army was on the verge of disintegration. Only the timely arrival of the American aid and equipment which began to get into the field in the Summer and Fall of 1947 prevented Greece from falling.

The communists believed that Greece was almost in their grasp. In August, at the height of the fighting, the Soviet Union vetoed a United Nations proposal for an international border patrol to seal off Greece from her neighbors. This shocked none of the members of the United Nations. Soviet orchestration of the Greek

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<sup>81</sup>Truman, pp. 108-109; Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1798/1, p. 57. Operational Archives.

insurgency was widely recognized. The devastation in Greece had by now reached staggering proportions. The American press reported that there were more than 300,000 homeless refugees from the fighting zones. Moreover, American aid was not reaching Greece quickly, destruction by the rebels was outpacing economic reconstruction, and greek farmers were still refusing to expose themselves by tending their fields. In fact, very little Winter wheat had been planted. This last point held grave portents for the future of Greece since a stable agricultural base was necessary for economic recovery.<sup>82</sup>

Nonetheless, the importance of American naval visits to Greece and Turkey cannot be overlooked. In fact, in 1947 both nations began to lobby for priority in receiving the ships. In October, as the destroyers Keith and Putnam visited Iskenderun, Turkey, a reception was held for the officers of the two ships. One of the American officers reported that the Greek Consul had stood by as his wife argued that the ships should be visiting Greece. As she pointed out:

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<sup>82</sup>Message from Naval Attaché, Athens to COMNAVMEDE, 5 August, 1947, "Greece" EF31; "Battle for Greece," Time, 17 November 1947, p. 37.



- a. The needs of Greece were greater than those of Turkey.
- b. Turkey had not helped win World War II.
- c. The United States was better liked by the Greeks than by the Turks, and,
- d. That the ships would have a far more enjoyable time in Greece than they were having in Turkey.<sup>83</sup>

Ship visits continued throughout the Fall and into the Winter of 1947-1948. In November two destroyers of TF125, Owens and Henley, made a grand tour of Greece visiting Pireaus, Salonika, Kalamata (the port in the Pelopennessus seized by Rightists earlier), Kavalla, Naxos, Port Vatai, Khios, Mitilini, and Alexandroupolis. Also that month, the destroyer Ellison had visited Patras. In December, the Ellison was still in Patras, while the destroyer Steinaker visited Salonika and the island of Corfu. January, 1948, saw the cruiser Little Rock return to Greek waters where she joined the Ellison in a visit to Pireaus. Also, the Destroyers Bailey and Gyatt visited Salonika and other ports that month.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Visit Report of Keith (DD775) and Putnam (DD757) to Iskenderun, Turkey, G-13 October 1947, Serial 011, Operational Archives.

<sup>84</sup>Visit Reports.

By January 1948, TF125 had grown far beyond the cruiser and two destroyers RADM James had been given in 1945 to carry out his mission in the Mediterranean. U. S. Naval Forces, Mediterranean, now usually included a carrier, three to five cruisers and up to a dozen destroyers. Further, an intervention capability had been ordered to the Mediterranean in January. Carriers stayed in the Mediterranean only for short cruises, perhaps two or three months, while the cruisers and destroyers would spend six months and the Marine battalion four months before rotating back to the United States to be replaced by similar units.<sup>85</sup>

Of additional significance for the U. S. Navy in the Mediterranean in January of 1948, was the choice of Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman as the new Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Mediterranean. This indicated the character of the Navy's commitment in the Mediterranean, for, as the American press was quick to point out, Sherman had been instrumental in strategic planning and was chosen by Nimitz in January 1947 to present War Plan PINCHER to President Truman. In many ways, the

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<sup>85</sup>Quarterly Summary, 1 October 1947-31 March 1948, Serial 094, Operational Archives.

deployment of U. S. Navy forces into the Mediterranean was Sherman's brainchild all along. Upon his appointment to the Mediterranean command, Sherman emphasized to the press that there was a direct relationship between the success of the European recovery program and the maintenance of strong American naval forces in being, particularly in the Mediterranean. This led Newsweek to conclude that "Aid to the Greek Army is only one means of exerting American power. The chief burden falls on the United States Mediterranean Fleet."<sup>86</sup>

Realizing the increased importance of "Task Force" 125, as well as the fact that TF125 was one of the premier naval forces in the world in 1948 because of its power, size, and high state of operational readiness, Admiral Connolly, Commander Naval Forces Europe, suggested in January that the name of the units in the Mediterranean be changed to 4th Task Fleet without changing any command relationships. In June 1948, the name was officially changed, but to Sixth Task Fleet. In 1950 the name was finally changed to its present

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<sup>86</sup>"Hottest Battlefield in the Cold War," Newsweek, 26 January 1948, p. 23.



form, the Sixth Fleet. Nevertheless, the form of the American naval presence in the Mediterranean has remained little change since January 1948. By then, the fleet had been well established in all but name.<sup>87</sup>

The success of that fleet in its mission in support of the Allied strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean was suggested in 1948 by Joseph Stalin in talks with Yugoslav leader Milovan Djilas:

What do you think that Great Britain and the United States--the United States the most powerful state in the world--will permit you to break their sea line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea? Nonsense! And we have no navy. The uprisings in Greece must be stopped and as quickly as possible.<sup>88</sup>

This suggests that the Soviets had adopted a specific strategy in 1945-1946 designed to gain bases to cut the Allied lines of communication to Turkey and the Middle East. It also indicates that some of the assumptions about Soviet strategy by the PINCHER planners were valid. In the event, in 1948, Stalin's order effectively destroyed the Greek rebellion. Diehards of ELAS fought

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<sup>87</sup>Message from COMNAVEU to CNO, 27 January 1948, Leahy Papers #49 (Messages), Operational Archives.

<sup>88</sup>Milovan Djilas, Conversations With Stalin, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962), p. 182.

on after the Soviets had cut off supplies and had closed the neighboring communist sanctuaries. Nonetheless, ELAS had achieved sufficient success for the American government to continue to fear for the stability of the Athens regime throughout 1948. However, with the end of direct Soviet support and the infusion of American aid, the real danger to the Greek government from communist insurgency had ended.

CONCLUSION

A powerful lesson of the establishment of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean is that the application of naval presence in peacetime depends for success upon the perceptions of those toward whom the demonstration is directed. The American forces involved in the Mediterranean were always small. Never was there more than one carrier and her escorts, less than 10% of the active carrier force in navy and less than 4% of the total number of carriers available to the U. S. Navy upon mobilization. Yet the American naval deployment into the Mediterranean clearly impressed the Soviet Union, and it responded. Left nearly unnoticed was the British Mediterranean Fleet which also sailed the Mediterranean in the summer of 1947, and which included two carriers. Also ignored was the U. S. Naval Academy's summer training cruise which entered the Mediterranean during the summer of 1947, and disposed of two battleships, two carriers and seven other warships. For a navy which was not allowed to move into the Mediterranean when it desired to in early 1946 because of a lack of assets, that was an awesome fleet assembled simply to train Midshipmen. But because the training mission



was acknowledged by all nations, it posed no threat and the training cruise has thus escaped mention by historians discussing the Cold War.<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps the reason that the strong Royal Navy fleet in the Mediterranean also escaped notice is that the Mediterranean had been a British lake for over 150 years. All expected the British to be there in strength. However, the Americans were not. By supporting the Truman Doctrine with a high profile, the U. S. Navy exemplified an American involvement in peacetime European affairs which itself ran counter to all previous policy.

Finally, the pre-positioning of American naval forces in the Mediterranean for the first time in a peaceful world suggested that United States security interests had a global character. With the realization that American wartime strategy under a PINCHER scenario was dependent upon Middle Eastern oil and the industry of Western Europe, the need to counter Soviet designs upon those great prizes became slowly evident. Within the larger context of the Cold War, U. S. naval strategy in the Mediterranean was mostly reactive. While war planning clearly eased the transition from prewar

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<sup>89</sup>Quarterly Summary, 1 April 1947-1 July 1947, Serial 203.

insularity to Cold War globalism, the uncertain and responsive quality of American foreign policy during 1946 suggests considerable reluctance on the part of decision-makers in Washington to acknowledge a sharp break with their wartime allies in Moscow. Once this decision was made, however, the force that eventually became the Sixth Fleet became the most forward extension of American power.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The focus and topic of this study are unique. However, the following studies proved to be material to this work: Stephen G. Xydis, "American Naval Visits to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean" (Unpubl. Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 1956); Jonathan Knight, "American Statecraft and the 1946 Black Sea Straits Controversy," Political Science Quarterly, V. 90, No. 3 (Fall 1975), pp. 451-475; Guy Cane, "The Buildup of U. S. Naval Force in the Mediterranean as an Instrument of Cold War Policy" (Washington, D. C.: National War College Paper, 1975); and Floyd Kennedy and David Rosenberg, "History of the Strategic Arms Competition: U. S. Aircraft Carriers in the Strategic Role, 1945-1951" (Falls Church, Virginia: Lulejian & Assoc., 1975).

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER U.S.N.A. - TSPR; no. 95 (1978)	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
(6) NAVAL PRESENCE AND COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY A STUDY OF THE DECISION TO STATION THE 6TH FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1945-1958		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Final, 1977/78.
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) (10) Dennis M. Pricolo		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS United States Naval Academy, Annapolis.		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS United States Naval Academy, Annapolis.		12. REPORT DATE (11) 1 June 1988
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office) (9) Final Rept. 1977-1978		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 128 p.
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED.
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  This document has been approved for public release; its distribution is UNLIMITED. (14) USNA-TSPR-95		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20; if different from Report)  This document has been approved for public release; its distribution is UNLIMITED. (12) 132 p.		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES  Accepted by the chairman of the Trident Scholar Committee.		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Foreign relations. Sea-power. Mediterranean region. U.S. Navy.		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The study deals with the origins of the U.S. 6th Fleet and its role in the Mediterranean region in the aftermath of World War II. The research based on <sup>two</sup> great themes. First the postwar American strategists and foreign policymakers reacted to hostile moves by the Soviets with great hesitancy since they lacked sufficient force to uphold a policy of greater stiffness. The second theme is the enduring utility of naval power, and its richness and flexibility. The writer is planning to make a further research on the role of the Sixth Task Fleet.		

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